SAMAREN ROY

THE TWICE-BORN HERETIC

M.N. ROY AND COMINTERN

This study about M. N. Roy's years abroad is a sequel to the study of the early life of M. N. Roy, *The Restless Brahmin*, by Samaren Roy. The present volume covers the period, 1916 to 1930, the first being the year when M. N. Roy, then a militant nationalist revolutionary, arrived in America as a fugitive from British police and the second when he returned to India after fifteen years of active political life abroad and was imprisoned for six years.

This volume analyses the development of M. N. Roy's personality from a Hindu nationalist to a revolutionary internationalist and a controversial Marxist thinker. His role and position in the Communist International as the leading Asian member is also examined.

The book has an exclusive chapter on Evelyn Trent, Roy's American wife and collaborator from 1916 to 1925, and analyses her role in the development of his Marxist revolutionary personality.

with a foreword by
Prof. Benoyendranath Banerjea

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To

those hundreds of young Radicals whose
lives Roy thought he had wasted but
who, on their part, felt he had enriched

TWICE-BORN

In Sanskrit birds are described as twice-born once in the egg and next when they break out of their shells. The term is also used to designate Brahmins, among whom M. N. Roy was born, because their admission to their caste is not by birth alone but by subsequent formal initiation. In a literal sense Roy was twice-born, but metaphorically he was the chick who broke through his Hindu shell in the U.S.A. and Mexico.

FOREWORD

M. N. Roy had jointed the militant nationalist group of Indian freedom fighters at an early age, and later carried on a lone search for radical solution to problems of humanity. Having been involved in revolutionary action in Mexico, Russia and China, he returned to the land of his birth and sought to change tactics of revolution and to revolutionise Indian society.

The author of this volume has already established himself as a meticulous student on the life, times and thought of M. N. Roy. His previous publication, *The Restless Brahmin*: The Early Life of M. N. Roy (1970) is an essential reading for students of the history of Indian freedom movement.

The present volume stands high on another account. Those who are interested in the zig-zag of the theory and practice of Marxism and its significance as a humanist philosophy will find in the analysis and discussions in the book food for serious thought.

Samaren Roy has known M. N. Roy (no kin) at close quarters. He has moreover collected and analysed materials of relevance from many parts of the world by travelling on his own and interviewing people.

As a friend and admirer of M. N. Roy, with whom I have had the privilege of working closely for a number of years, I consider the present study and analysis of Roy vis-a-vis Communist International and the philosophy and practice of Marxism an important contribution to Marxist political history.

Santiniketan,
West Bengal, India
2nd October 1985

Benoyendranath Banerjea

ERRATA

(Mis-spellings excluded)

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to Hamdi Bey for his assistance.

12, Sourin Roy Road,
Calcutta-34
18 December 1985

Samaren Roy

THE PICTURE ON THE FACING PAGE

The picture on the facing page was taken on the inaugural day of the Second Congress of the Communist International at the entrance of the Uritsky Palace in Leningrad. "For years it was given a prominent place in the offices of the Communist Parties of all countries" (Roy, *Memoirs*, p. 366)

In the foreground of the picture is Lenin ; behind him is Maxim Gorky ; behind Gorky on his left is John Reed (with hat on) ; on Reed's left is Zinoviev. The tall man at the centre is M. N. Roy (wavy hair) with Lenin's sister Maria on his left ; between Roy and Maria and behind them is Roy's wife, Evelyn. Others in the picture are Karl Radek on extreme left with cigarette in his mouth ; on the right of Radek with an intervening figure is Bukharin. On the extreme right of the picture is Borodin (moustached).

[Courtesy : David King, London N 1.]

PREFACE

This biographic study of M. N. Roy covers the period of his life from 1916 to 1930, the first being the year when he arrived in America as a political fugitive and the second when he returned to India after fifteen years of active political life abroad, and is a sequel to my earlier publication, *The Restless Brahmin* : The Early Life of M. N. Roy (1970).

A biography of M. N. Roy dealing with this period cannot just be a chronicle of events, or a story of his activities in diverse countries or a vindication of policies he had advocated at different times. Ideas—his, of those he clashed with, and of the Age—have a significance which have to be accorded proper recognition.

Ideas and events are intertwined. The events of Roy's life or in other words, his behaviour, the manner in which he acted or reacted to developments, were to a great extent determined by the ideas he held at the time of a particular decision taken by him. He was not a successful man ; if he had acted differently from his ideas he would have been an opportunist; if he had refused to revise his opinions he would have been obstinate and unrealistic.

When I wrote *The Restless Brahmin* dealing with the first 28 years of his life the subject of the biography was a romantic revolutionary. In this volume I have tried to analyse the development of his personality as a Marxist thinker when he also became a controversial person. The task has not been easy.

The myth' of his prescience survives. It is a Marxist myth arising out of historical determinism. Roy himself had to struggle against it. Because Roy's understanding of Marxism was highly individual, though rigorously logical. In theoretical Marxism he clashed with Lenin, and differed from all those before him, in regard to the sequence of revolution. Roy held that revolution in the colonies would liberate the proletarians in the metropolitan countries while orthodox Marxists (all Europeans) gave priority to revolution in the industrialised countries which has not happened yet.

There were differences, almost with everybody. Roy was like a Marxist porcupine bristling with differences with everybody. That is why the study of the developments of his thought is so interesting.

Marx and Engels were observers of events in their own times and speculated about the likely outcome of those developments. The tone was however prophetic. Uncritical followers were taken in by the tone, in which inevitability became a synonym for historical determinism. Roy had often to remind people that Marx did not cast the horoscope of mankind. Hence, writings of Marx and Engels were often helpful, but nearly as often obstructive. Inevitability was the obstacle. Each creative thinker in the Marxist tradition had to surmount that obstacle : Plekhanov, Lenin, Trotsky and Rosa Luxemburg ; Roy also belonged to that category.

Refusal to flog a dead horse was characteristic of Roy, leading those who would not or did not want to understand him to allegations of inconsistence. When he realised that an insurrection in India with German arms was not feasible he gave up the attempt, and turned to problems in his host country, Mexico. When in 1940 he came to the conclusion that an Allied victory will not only end the fascist menace from the world but also lead to India's independence he did not hesitate to espouse that cause despite vituperative accusations from the nationalists, and expulsion from the Indian National Congress.

Roy's passion for preservation of 'socialism in one country' led him to differ with Trotsky and to side with Stalin—an emotional relationship he was not able to outgrow in spite of the brutality of Stalin's regime, even though he himself was the victim of that policy and so were others like him, Brandler, Thalheimer and Lovestone—people whom he liked and respected. Worse were the fates of Borodin and Bukharin to whom Roy's debt were great.

In later years, after the second world war, Roy was appalled at Russia taking Communism by arms to Eastern Europe, though he had heard of 'Red Napoleanism' from Stalin himself. Here entered one of Roy's theories that the humanist culture of Europe could produce a more humane, liberal and creative version of Communism than had been possible in Russia. The emphasis on humanism, from a person whom popular imagination had conceived of as a ruthless revolutionary, surprised many, and confused many more.

The incompatability of Communism and Humanism was something Roy was not prepared to concede. He held that Marx was a humanist. Marx's followers took his words literally and converted his writings into dogma, even though passages contradicted each other. Roy never tired of reminding Marxists that Marxism was a method of analysis of events in which individual greatness or perversity played unimportant roles. Stalin, he however held to be greatest man of his time, and wryly added that great men need not be good men.

Roy's approach to Marxism was however neither political nor economic: it was philosophical. He had rejected arrogant proletarianism as well as adoption of bourgeois manners and attitudes. He had come to the conclusion that "intellectual aristocracy being a common human heritage, it alone could lay down the foundation of a really new social order". He believed that 18th century was an age of intellectual aristocracy, and that in that century the characteristically European culture reached its high water mark. Roy was in sympathy with Antonio Gramsci that the philosophical aspect of Marxism needed to be revised so that it could offer something to the idealistically inclined.

He counted a great deal however on personal relationships not being impaired by political differences, and enjoyed Bernstein, Kautsky, Thalheimer and Meyer exchanging opinions in the drawing room of Simon, the banker in Berlin. He remained well disposed towards Doriot and Sneevliet despite later political differences. Indian journalist Sunder Kabadi relates a Christmas dinner in 1929 in Berlin with Roy and A. C. N. Nambiar at which Viren Chattopadhyaya was a friendly participant in spite of a background of political hostility between

Roy and Viren Chatto. He put value on humaneness. and was in many senses a political bohemian. Yet, when from his prison cell he heard Mendelssohn's *Death March* being played in the cemetry it did not make him sad, only more resolute to savour life after release. One year gone, only five left; four years gone, only two left. That was his spirit.

On one issue however he was not as discerning. That was the issue of the International. When the Kremlin clock tower stopped playing the 'Internationale', Roy wrote in his *Memoirs* :

> "As late as in the earlier years of the Second World war, I used to tune in Moscow every evening to hear the stirring music, which came thousands of miles over the Himalayas. Day after day came the news of the Red Army falling back before the Nazi war machine. On the outskirts of Moscow, it was touch and go; Leningrad might fall any day; the Ukraine was overrun; a whole army corps was trapped in Kiev; the Germans reached Stalingrad and the gates of Asia at the foot of the Caucasus. And every evening the music from the clock tower of the Kremlin restored my faith in the ultimate outcome of the war. Suddenly, one evening, the message of hope failed to come. I tuned in the next evening, and the next. The message of hope came no more. At the same hour, the bells in the Kremlin clock tower began playing the new Russian national anthem instead of the *Internationale*. Not only was a hope dashed, a period of history was over; I lost my faith in the liberating significance of the Russian Revolution. That was twenty two years after the day when I stood in the Red Square overwhelmed by the music of the bells ringing before my own eyes. So many things happened in the interveing period which, for me, closed in 1942" (p. 330).

"The slogan of national culture is a bourgeois fraud. . . .Our slogan is international culture."

—Lenin

I. Bengali Cultural Background

NAREN BHATTACHARYA AT 17 WHEN HE JOINED A REVOLUTIONARY group, or at 29 when he changed his name to M. N. Roy was heir to a long process of ideological development and cultural resurgence which swept Bengal from the beginning of the nineteenth century. It is possible to overemphasize his Brahmin heritage—priestly, intellectual, supercilious and abstemious. That would be a distortion and an exaggeration. The Brahmin heritage itself had undergone much dilution.

The first dilution was Hindu. Other groups as patrons and clients of the priests had entered into their social and economic relations. The patrons were the rulers who were enjoined from the 2nd century B. C. onward that protection of "Brahmins and Cows" were their sacred duty.

For fairly long periods, large tracts of India were ruled by Brahmin dynasties but the patrons in the main were other groups, generally assigned Kshattriya status. The Gupta emperors and numerous Rajput princelings were among the patrons of the Brahmins—they gave the priestly class both respect and sustenance but ultimate authority was secular. The Brahmins were never organized in anything like a church, and the conflict between them and the State remained only implicit. It is made explicit in the Parasuram myth--the axe-man who is supposed to have largely exterminated the Kshattriyas—and in the story of how the Mahabharata came to be narrated. Neither of them can yet be assigned specific dates.

The clients belonged to various castes—kinsmen of rulers, farmers, traders, herdsmen and artisans. None of them had

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The clients belonged to various castes—kinsmen of rulers, farmers, traders, herdsmen and artisans. None of them had authority but their contributions kept Brahmin families in reasonable comfort without having to engage in manual labour.

Many compromises must have been reached with both patrons and clients, and also with Muslim rulers (when they arrived on the scene in the 13th century A.D.), who as a group could not be counted upon as patrons. Even patronage by individual Muslim kings of particular Brahmins was late in appearance. The earliest definite instances belong to the reign of Firoz Tughluq in the 14th century. They are more frequent in Akbar's reign in the 16th century and continued thereafter except for Aurangzeb's rule during the latter half of the 17th century.

Brahmins may not have received privileges as priests during the earlier centuries of Muslim rule but were employed in various capacities especially in the collection of revenue. They were also exempt from the *jizzia* (personal poll tax levied on non-Muslims), expect during Aurangzeb's time.

From the 16th century, when Sher Shah ordered revenue records to be kept in Persian, Brahmins had been learning the language of the Muslim court which by the end of the 17th century became the language of elite correspondence all over the country, except the extreme South. Even at the Court of the Marhatta Peshwas, a Persian *daftar* used to be maintained.

Persian, and along with Persian some elements of Muslim thought entered in the Brahmin heritage. It was not admitted for that might have looked like renegacy but Maharshi Debendra Nath Tagore, father of the poet, loved to recite *Hafiz*. The Tagores were of course rich and important, and liable to be drawn into the Persian culture. Naren Bhattacharya came from a poor family of village priests and Sanskrit teachers. He was not exposed to modern infiuences directly, but somewhere in his sub-conscious might have lurked the example of a group of Hindus influenced by association with Muslim court who generally carried the title of Rais or Roys, and became important in society. This is borne out by his choice of M. N. Roy as his name on arrival in San Francisco in 1916.[1]

The new name was actually a translation of his older one:

Manabendra Nath is a synonym of Narendra Nath. Any Bhattacharya employed in the Mughal bureaucracy would have been called a Roy.

Other influences diluting the narrow Brahmin tradition were also present. The revolutionary group, that Roy had joined, contained Kayasthas like Arabindo Ghose[2] and Bhupendra Nath Dutta[3], and drew inspiration both from the Brahmin, Bankim Chandra Chatterjee[4] and the Kayastha, Swami Vivekananda[5]. The advent of British rule had created a situation in which Brahmins and Kayasthas could be partners in an enterprise with the Brahmin only claiming and being conceded nominal hierarchical superiority in social life. Though this co-operation across the caste barrier became common in the 19th century, it has originated earlier during Muslim rule, and created a Hindu elite (of Brahmins, Kayasthas, Vaidyas and Rajputs mainly) which in many fields—ideas, clothing, personal habits, style and vocations—shared a common composite culture with their Muslim counterparts.

The existence of this elite and its composite culture has often been denied its importance, but the modernization of India, however perfunctory and erratic, was the achievement of members of this elite responding to Western influences. But composite culture nationalism was still born in India. Its form was Perso-Islamic, even though Persia, Central Asia and Turkey—the sources from which the culture could draw material for its renewal—were themselves lagging behind the times. European influence had to filter through Moslem sensibilities. Much was happening in Europe but most of the seminal ideas of European Renaissance were rejected by the intervening Muslims and never reached India.

That the composite culture had reached a dead end was first realized by Mirza Abu Talib[6], who paid a short visit to Britain at the close of the 18th century. On return to Calcutta, he wrote an account of his journey and helped in the introduction to India of the idea of "progress". He also advocated the imitation of British institutions.

The other person to come to the same realization was the composite culture's best product, its sharpest mind and boldest thinker—Rammohun Roy (1772-1833). He was a Brahmin who had received, as was customary in those days, an education in Persian, Arabic and Sanskrit. He realized the negative influence of the ascriptive society on the composite culture, whose Hindu and Muslim members remained separate though participants in many joint activities. He attacked the ascriptive society, and contended that religious beliefs could not be inherited; every person on reaching maturity had to choose his own beliefs.

Rammohun's first book was in Persian, written around 1804, when he was in his early thirties. It might have shocked his contemporaries but did not have much influence on subseqent generations The significant fact about the book is its resemblance in diction, style and manner of argument to Shah Waliyullah's writing[7]. The composite culture was creating its own intellectual tradition, whose origins lay in the writings of Abul Fazl and Faizi (in Akbar's time) and Dara Shukoh and several others in the middle of the 17th century.

Dwarkanath Tagore (1794-1846)[8], grand-father of the poet Rabindranath, and a friend of Rammohun, was another person to realize that the culture of the Indian elite could be revitalized only by drawing upon European thought. Dwarkanath also belonged to a composite culture family but had gone to a school in Calcutta which taught English boys, whereas Rammohun had to learn English as an adult.

Once however the limitations of the composite cuture were realized, it was quickly discarded by both Rammohun and Dwarkanath. They opted instead for English education. The Islamic framework of the composite culture made it unsuitable for naturalization of European ideas because of its dependence upon religion. Yet a native root-stock was needed to graft those ideas for healthy growth. Rammohun turned to the *Upanishads* which seemed least cluttered by ritualism and medievalism. The composite culture received a blow from which it never recovered though many attempts were made to revive it.

Rammohun's earlier challenge to the ascriptive society was forgotten, and Indian society remained ascriptive—birth determines faith, language, dress and attitudes of a person. That was unfortunate; introduction of English education led to the problem of identity—a problem which curiously had not arisen during 300 years of education in Persian. Did those receiving education in English remain Hindus or become something different? The problem was solved by Henry Louis Vivian Derozio (1809-1831)[9], himself of mixed descent, who stated that those receiving English education were Hindu by birth but European by education. Derozio's influence on a number of Bengali young men was great, and he became the leader of a movement which called itself Young Bengal—a name which was imitated in Turkey early in the Twentieth Century.

Rammohun, Dwarkanath and Derozio between them ushered into India the Enlightenment—deist but non-denominational. Earlier, India had come near to being influenced by the European Renaissance but had to overcome three impediments: First, the want of a linguistic means of communication. This was removed by the introduction of English. Second, rejection of printing by the Indian litterati. This too was removed by the cutting of Bengali types in the last quarter of the 18th century and by the introduction of lithography for Urdu printing. The last was the Portuguese and later some Britons being bent upon securing converts to Christianity.

Evangelism was very much in the air after 1813, when the East India Company lifted its ban on missionaries preaching in its territories. Rammohun Roy who had wanted to modernize the culture of the elite and bring it closer to the practical ethics of the Europeans found friendly missionaries attacking him for not having become a Christian. Rammohun wanted the Enlightenment and not Christianity. There was acrimonious controversy whose echoes are heard even now. The Evangelists criticised Hinduism to make Hindus ashamed of it; hoping Hindus would then renounce their religion. Reformers among Hindus criticised particular aspects of Hindu society to secure social change. Their work was hampered greatly by Evangelical denunciations, which made Hindus sensitive to criticism, an attitude which has persisted to this day.

Rammohun did not found a new religion—only a society of deists who shunned some of the more objectionable customs and practices. Its organization into a sect occurred later. The society founded in 1828 was called Brahmo Sabha. Dwarkanath was one of its sponsors. Derozio did not join it, but one of the leaders of Young Bengal did—some of them became Christians too. Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar (1820-1891)[10], did not join it, not because that great social reformer wanted to remain a Hindu but because he was an agnostic and refused to be a member of a deistic group.

All these remarkable people ushered in the Enlightenment. Michael Madhusudan Datta (1824-1873) wrote poetry and became Bengal's first humanist in the sense of drawing upon the Greek and Latin literary heritage in addition to Sanskrit and Persian. The early Bankim Chandra Chatterjee (1838-1894) was also a humanist. Krishna Mohan Banerjee (1813-1885) compiled a Bengali encyclopaedia.

Meawhile the feedback of Europe's Oriental Renaissance was being received. Willian Jones[11] in 1783 had discovered Sanskrit's closeness to Greek, Latin and German. The idea was propagated that since the Indo-European languages belonged to the same linguistic family, their speakers belonged to the same ethnic family—the Aryans. On the other hand, speakers of Arabic were Semites, and most Indian Muslims were either converts from Hinduism or descended from Turkish invaders. The converts were from low-caste non-Aryan groups. The bulk of the Muslims were therefore linguistically and ideologically or ethnically outside the pale of Aryanism. The justification for a composite culture vanished.

The new Learning introduced in 1820s and 1830s produced a number of scholars. They demonstrated proficiency in linguistic and historical research. They followed the methods of the Humanists and edited texts leaving the field of sciences largely to European investigators. The editing of ancient texts and their publication created a resurgence of Hinduism—it was the first time that printed Hindu texts were being circulated. The composite culture and the Islamic period were dismissed as medievalism, and the discovery of ancient Hindu texts were seen as having the same role as the Renaissance discovery of Greek and Latin texts. But what later came to be called the Bengal Renaissance, which spilled over into other parts of India, was in part revivalist. Its period was after 1860, and closed the Enlightenment.

Revivalism became active after 1868 when Rajnarayan Basu (1826-1899)[12] organized the *Hindu Mela.* Rajnarayan Basu was a Brahmo. So were the Tagores—a composite culture family—but they participated in it. Nationalism, implicit in Waliyullah and the 1804 declaration of India as fit for religious war against the British—and more explicitly put forth by Derozio in the first poem on Indian nationalism (in English)—came to be identified with Hindu nationalism.

The 1857 uprising was nationalist too in the fashion of the composite culture but it was in feudal interests and had exploited the religious taboos of both Hindus and Muslims. The active participants were Marathas, Muslims and upper caste Hindus of Bihar and Uttar Pradesh. The Bengali intelligentsia had not been affected by it. The rebels had reinstalled the reigning Moghul as Emperor though for years he had lived as a British pensioner with no authority outside his fort and shorn of his imperial titles and prerogatives. Its failure ruled out all possibilities of joint action by Hindus and Muslims. Henceforth the two had to seek their advancement separately in a Britism Indian empire, proclaimed formally in 1858.

Bengali Hindus were a rising class largely because of access to English education and European culture. They could not afford to be tied down to a past largely Muslim, which had already become redundant. While following the changes in the attitudes of this class it is necessary to bear in mind that after the failure of the 1857 uprising the British gave a pledge that no changes in Indian custom would be brought about. The era of social reform was finished, and Rammohum Roy (who had campaigned against burning of widows) and Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar (who had obtained legislative permission for widows to remarry) became rather hazy figures. Their achievements were remembered, their spirit and motivations were forgotten. Progress became identified with personal advancement.

Opportunities for personal advancement followed the failure of the 1857 uprising. The highest cadre in the bureaucracy became open to talent, and Indians were allowed to compete. In 1861 the first Indian, a Tagore[13] and elder brother of Rabindranath, entred the Indian Civil Service. Henceforth the educated Bengali elite looked to careers in the Civil Service (Bankim Chandra Chatterjee had joined in a slightly lower cadre) and the liberal professions. It was a small class whose needs could be met in spite of the racial exclusiveness of the British bureaucracy.

Still the intellectual ferment of the 1820s and 1830s could not be quietened. It found expression in religious movements—not social reform by legislation but individual improvement through religious motivation. Debendra Nath Tagore (1817-1905) was the first, who rejected his father's westernization, objected to Christian Evangelism. and gave formal shape to the Brahmo Samaj.

One of Debendra Nath's younger associates conceived of himself as a religious reformer not confined to Bengalis, Hindus or Indians. He took a Messianic role, and while incorporating much of Christianity in Brahmo thought and practice, also wanted to reduce the social gap between his people and the English rulers. He preached that all religions had arisen in Asia, and that Asia was more spiritual while Europe was materialistic. The idea was not original; some minor European thinkers had dropped hints to that effect. Keshub Chandra Sen (1838-1884) however preached it with vigour.

Followers of Keshub Sen were shocked when he arranged the marriages in 1878 of his daughter, barely 12 years of age, to the ruling prince of Cooch Behar. This was the first important inter-caste marriage, and could and did, set a precedent. Though since the time of Rammohum Roy, Brahmos had frowned on the caste system, marriages had continued to be within the caste. But Brahmos had equally opposed child marriage, and Keshub Sen's critics found his action inconsistent.

A group broke away from Sen and founded a new Brahmo group. Its important leader was Sibnath Sastri (1847-1919), brother of M. N. Roy's maternal grand-mother.

The caste system is concerned with ritual behaviour not faith. In the same family each member can profess, privately thought not secretly, a different Hindu faith but his public behaviour must not offend caste restrictions. Both Saktas and Vaishnavas can live together in the same family; and worship their respective deities, but neither can break a food taboo or marry outside the endogamous circle prescribed by the caste tradition or within the prohibited circle that is within the same *gotra*. But since Rammohun formed his Atmiya Sabha in 1915, thirteen years before the Brahmo Sabha, conscience had entered as the thin end of a wedge in the Hindu Bengali sensibility. The wedge continued to push, and many people by 1860 did believe that example was better than precept, and one had to act according to one's beliefs.

Instead of being caste representatives, the English-educated Bangalis wanted to be individuals, not conformists but normative. It was a change which created the field for a new kind of narrative prose—the novel. The form was imported or imititative of English novels, but would have failed if it had not made sense to a number of readers, and it could make sense only if the readers thought as did the author, that the characters were individuals, often involved in choosing actions in consonance with the ideals they held, and not doing what was expected of them because of their station in life.

Bankim Chatterjee wrote a number of novels between 1864 and 1886. His characters were normative, and encouraged further individuation. His influence on the educated class was formative though he was not a Brahmo. He discovered enough intellectual and moral resources within Hinduism to enable a Bengali to be upright without having to seek refuge in either Brahmoism or Christianity. No longer had modernization to be overtly dramatic. Chatterjee found an answer to the quest begun by Rammohun—a native rootstock to graft modernization on for healthy growth.

Ramakrishna Paramahansa (1836-86) found an answer to Keshub Sen's quest for a religion which combined the "best" in all religions. He was pious and quietist and his answer was to go through piety and avoidance of religious controversies. He successively went through the experiences of a Muslim and a Christian and then reverted to Hinduism, not because it was "better" than the others but because its mores came to him naturally. All religions led to the same awareness of Divinity, he said. No further scope for polemics was left.

Rammohun's Deism had raised God above religions, and while conceding that each religion contained a measure of great truth, Rammohun did not specify his preferences. Enthusiasms of his youth, which lingered on, inclined him toward Islam but the compulsions of modernism drew him toward Christianity. He did not abjure Hinduism but felt that much reform was needed to restore it to its fundamentals.

The solution reached by Ramakrishna was to separate faith from rituals, and to render faith a matter of personal experience. The quality of religious experience did not depend upon the dogma adhered to but the intensity of fervour of the devotee. The issue of professing the ancestral faith or substituting it by one of choice became personal, internalised within the man. It was an excellent solution as far as individuals were concerned. But it solved few social dilemmas.

Certain important social functions of religion remained untouched. That task was undertaken by his disciple, Narendra Nath Datta, who later became Swami Vivekananda (1862-1902). He took upon himself to provide Hinduism with ideals of charity and social service which had not been important in traditional society. He also provided it with an instrument for rendering charity and social service through the Ramakrishna Mission. The provocation for Vivekananda to turn to Ramakrishna Paramhansa and religion had probably come from an observation of Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, that if God was benevolent how did he let so many people suffer in famines.

By the time of his death in 1902, Vivekanda had rendered the Brahmo schism redundant. Rabindra Nath Tagore wrote the novel *Gora,* around an Irish hero like Kipling's *Kim,* which is attributed as a tribute to Vivekananda's Irish disciple, Sister Nivedita, in which the disdainful attitudes towards each other of the Hindu and the Brahmo are shown as uncalled for.

Vivekananda had done more. Conversion to Christianity among the educated and the more sensitive went out of fashion. By his appearance in Chicago and a visit to Japan he invested India with a mission to reclaim the world for spirituality, and he sounded less ecclectic than Keshub Sen.

Nineteenth century Bengal had thus become the scene of great intellectual, moral and spiritual ferment. This ferment which encompassed large numbers of educated people, belonging to at least two castes, without the intervention of priests, appealing often to history, not tradition, and directed to the good sense and reason of individuals, cutting out invocations to gods through rituals, weakened Brahmanism. Even Sanskrit did not remain an exclusive preserve of the Brahmins, nor could the reading of sacred texts be prohibited to other castes, after Europeans started translating and publishing the sacred texts.

Brahmins still had ritual functions in weddings and other ceremonies but they also worked as cooks and in offices. There was a tacit admission of their superiority but, by and large, individual Brahmins drew respect from secular activities—as rich landlords, civil servants, teachers, research scholars, writers, painters and politicians. They now enjoyed respect on merit, and not by birth in a caste.

This was true of Calcutta, and with educated groups in smaller towns. In the villages, the Brahmins enjoyed greater respect as a caste but they were also better off than the peasants.

Previously Brahmins had ignored developments outside their own tradition, but at the close of the 19th century the Bengali tradition had become heterogenous—heretics like the Brahmin Rammohun Roy (he was treated as a heretic in his own days), Brahmins who had lost ritual purity like the Tagores, Christians like Derozio, converts to Christianity like K. M.

Banerjee and Madhusudan Datta, Brahmin reformers like Vidyasagar, and Kayasthas like Vivekananda entered into its making.

The educated class was small. The leaders were known and accessible. Young men who read about them in newspapers, or heard them in meetings, could also call on them at their homes and converse with them. The communication might have been only in one direction—instructions being given to the young—but the young were known to the leaders, and the young enjoyed a growing sense of importance.

Sibnath Sastri told the story of 19th century Bengal in a book written around the life of a school teacher, Ramtanu Lahiri[14]. This became a repository of the tradition and was of great educative value. The main point of the book is the easy access that the school master had to his great contemporaries, and the great moral fervour people had. Durga Mohan Das induced his friend to marry his widowed stepmother—people were ready to face criticism and even ridicule.

Naren Bhattacharya was born in this tradition. More important than his Brahmin heritage was the heritage of 19th century Bengal. In his village Changripota, in the southern suburban area of Calcutta, were born many of the religious and social reformers of nineteenth century Bengal, notable among them were Rajnarain Bose (maternal grand-father of Aurobindo Ghose and founder of the *Hindu Mela*), Dwarkanath Vidyabhusan, the famous editor and publisher of *Som Prakash* (which was published from that place) and an associate on Pundit Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, and his nephew Sibnath Sastri, the great social reformer and scholar and an uncle of Naren's mother.

* * *

However the Bengali society in which Roy had grown up until he left the country in 1915 was at least in part revivalist.

Bengali aspirations had diverged quite early from the feudal nationalism of upper India. The divergence however developed a logical corollary. It developed an element of parochialism. Parochialism was unavoidable by a small elitist group which was proud of its modernism (when the rest of India had remained backward) and thought it had in its possession in English education a key to progress.

Yet there was a need to overcome parochialism. This it did by emphasising its Hindu character, by its adherence to *Gita* and some of the *Upanishads,* which were non-Bengali in origin, by asserting that the *Gita* and *Upanishads* provided it with a code of conduct which was as good as, if not superior to, that provided by the Bible. Emphasis on its Hindu component made the Bengali nationalist elite take pride in the achievements of Hindus.

The next stage in the evolution of Bengali nationalism was the assumption of leadership in the task of the regeneration of the nation, more Hindu in character than composite culture Indian. Bankim Chandra Chatterjee was engrossed in the task, so was Vivekananda, and the sentiment occurred frequently in the writings of Aurobindo Ghosh in the first decade of the present century, while leading the *Swadeshi* movement. Roy was one of those involved in the militant *Swadeshi* movement, and as he himself admitted he had been influenced by Bankim Chandra Chatterjee's *Ananda Math* and Vivekananda.[15]

Bengali Hindu nationalism was however more modern in spirit and more contemporaneous than the composite culture's feudal nationalism. It reached its maximum fervour between 1900 and 1915, while Roy was in India and part of the movement.

This was the broad picture of the period but some individuals did make efforts in the direction of naturalising in India the secular culture of Europe. Henry Derozio was the pioneer in this direction, and induced his pupils read Tom Paine's *Age of Reason.* He met with hostility from both Christians and Hindus.

Rammohun Roy and Dwarkanath Tagore, inspite of involvement in matters religious, did contribute to the start of a secular culture which had its origin in Europe. Rammohun's contribution was introduction of English education, Dwarkanath's move in organizing in Calcutta the aesthetic life associated with European cities.

Two men who followed them and often worked together sought to create a Bengali culture universal in content. These were Michael Madhushdhan Datta and Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar. The early Bankim Chatterjee too made contributions but by 1880 the ebb had set in. European culture was rejected as materialistic and Hindu culture praised as spiritual.

But Bentinck and Dalhousie had set about modernizing education and investing in public works. By 1880 the rich in urban centres sent their children to schools where English was taught,[16] and a railway network had spread ever the country.

M. N. Roy grew up in an atmosphere where the influences of Bentinck and Dalhousie—education and railways—operated alongside those of Bankim Chandra Chatterjee and Vievkananda. The material aspects of the culture (railway and electricity) were European, the spiritual aspects were Hindu. The two stood apart from each other. Whereas previously there was a desire to absorb modern scientific knowledge, in the 1880s began a movement which Rabindranath Tagore described as a "curious attempt by Hindu orthodoxy to revive its prestige with the help of Western science".

It was not only science toward which the Bengali elites' attitude underwent a change. There was also a change towards English language and literature which consituted this elite's chief means of communication with the global culture which was Western.

Tagore reminiscing in 1911-12 wrote: "When on one occasion some new connection by marriage wrote my father an English letter it was promptly returned to the writer".[17] The man who sent back the letter was the son of Dwarkanath Tagore, who had patronized the English language theatre in Calcuttta and had sought to transplant a bit of European culture in his city, and the poet who approvingly recounted the incident was Dwarkanath's grandson.

It is necessary to quote Rabindranath again. Writing about Rajnarain Bose, a Brahmo, who in 1867 promoted the major revivalist organization, the Hindu Mela, the poet wrote: "He had been a favourite pupil of Richardson and brought up in an atmosphere of English learning, nevertheless he flung aside all obstacles due to this early habit and gave himself up lovingly and devotedly to Bengali literatures"[18].

There was however a marked difference between Rajnarain's adoption of Bengali for expression of his ideas and that of Michael Madhusudhan Datta. The latter was a cosmopolite who looked to European classics for inspiration and argued for Bengali writing on even Islamic topics. Rajnarain Bose devoted himself to writing in defence of Hinduism, in reconciling Brahmoism as a culmination of Hinduism, to an organization for the defence of Hindus and even for protection of cows. He was an exponent of Hindu Bengali nationalism.

Tagore's *Reminiscences* (written in 1911 and published in 1917) sums up exceeding well the cultural milieu which M. N. Roy left when he set sail from India and which he repudiated during his stay in Mexico. Tagore made the case that there were two different societies, the European and the Indian, and what had been a natural development in Europe were a mere "excitement" for India. Shakespeare, he thought, "represented the war-dance of the day when the Renascence came to Europe in all the violence of its reaction against the severe curbing and cramping of the hearts of men. The examination of good and evil, beauty and ugliness, was not its end, which is the beauty of perfectfulness consisting in simplicity and restraint"[19].

Herein for all practical purposes we have a rejection on aesthetic grounds of European culture, and if we compare it with Gandhi's *Hind Swaraj* of 1909 it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that by the turn of the century Indian thinkers had rejected Western culture. This was part of the ideology of Hindu nationalism, both Bengali and pan-Indian.

M. N. Roy left India in 1915. Though he mentions only *Ananda Math* and Vivekananda as the influences dominant on him the entire Indian culture at the turn of the century had rejected Westernization except for purposes of personal advancement. In the Hindu tradition however pursuit of material gains in conflict with the spiritual aims is condoned. When Roy repudiated *Ananda Math* and the ideas of Vivekananda on which he had been brought up, he was also repudiating Gandhi and Tagore whose ideas may not have directly entered his upbringing.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. When asked by Saralabala Sarakar, Roy's adopted mother, why did he change his name, Roy told her : "Narendra and Manabendra mean the same : and I was bored with the old-fashioned Bhattacharya, so changed it to Roy. Does'nt it sound grander ?" (Saralabala Sarkar—Manabendranath Roy in *DESH* (Bengali Weekly), 29 January 1955).

2. Aurobindo Ghose (1872--1950) was sent to England when he was a boy of six. Returning to India in 1892, he joined the Educational service of the Maharaja of Baroda and soon became the chief inspirer of the militant nationalist movement in Bengal. He retired from active politics after being acquitted in Alipore Conspiracy case and in 1910 went into recluse in Pondicherry, then under French rule, where he founded an *Ashram,* and died in 1950.

3. Bhupendranath Datta, younger brother of Swami Vivekananda, was the first editor of the Bengali militant revolutionary journal, *Jugantar,* founded by Aurobindo's brother Barin Ghose and after serving a short term in jail went to USA in 1908 and from there to Germany for studies. In Berlin he became one of the leaders of the Indian Revolutionary Committee.

4. Bankim Chandra Chatterjee (1839-1894) joined the British Government's Indian judicial service as a deputy Magistrate after his graduation and later, from 1864 began to write novels and essays. His novel, *Ananda Math,* published in 1880 soon became the handbook and inspiration for Bengali revolutionaries and his poem, *Bande Mataram,* incorporated in that novel, become the national song.

5. Swami Vivekananda (1863-1902) was the founder of the Ramakrishna Mission and became the chief guide and philosopher of the nationalist revolutionary movement.

6. Mirza Abu Taleb (1752-1806) served the Moghul governor of Bengal and after retirement came to Calcutta and learned English. Soon after he travelled to England with the help of a scottish friend. Returning to Calcutta, Abu Taleb recounted his impressions in Persian in "The Travels of Mirza Abu Taleb Khan" in which he noted the "energy and vitality of the English" and "their faith in development, progress and evolution".

7. Shah Waliyullah (1703-1762) translated the *Qoran* into Persian. In his '*Wasiyatnama*', Waliyullah expressed the hope "If it so happens

that the Marathas are able to obtain a complete domination over India, the Divine Mystery would force their leaders to embrace Islam".

8. See Blair N. Kling, *"Partner in Empire"*; published by the University of California Press in 1976 for a biographic study of Dwarkanath Tagore.

9. Henry Louis Vivian Derozio, born of Portuguese father and an English mother, became the inspirer of the intellectual stir when he joined the Hindu College as a teacher in 1926. One of his pupils, Pearychand Mitra wrote: "he used to impress upon them the sacred duty of thinking for themselves".

10. When Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar came to Calcutta to study at the Sanskrit College, "a strong wind of heresy and non-conformism" was then blowing. The source of this heresy was the Hindu College which was housed in the same building as the Sanskrit College. "The spirit which worked through the Hindu College boys also found an explosive outlet through him (Vidyasagar)" but "with keener intensity and social relevance".

11. Sir William Jones (1746-1794) was founder of the Asiatic Society of Bengal.

12. In 1866, Rajnarain Bose (maternal grand-father of Aurobindo Ghosh) founded the "Society for the Promotion of National Feeling" to uphold Hindu cultural heritage against the onslaught of Western culture and ideas. (See also Rabindranath Tagore—*Reminiscences,* Macmillan and Company, Indian edition, 1966. p. 148).

13. Poet Rabindranath Tagore's elder brother, Satyendranath.

14. Ramtanu Lahiri, one of the younger members of "Young Bengal" was a distinguished educationist. The name of the book is *Ramtanu Lahiri O Tatkalin Banga Samaj.*

15. Lord Ronaldshay, who came to Bengal as Governor in 1918, visited Bengali revolutionaries in jail and interviewed them. In his book, *"The Heart of Aryavarta"* published by Constable and Company, London in 1925, he observed:

> "...when the English came to Bengal the people of the land were decadent. They were a people whose vital spark had burned low... The *Swadeshi* movement had come like a tempest....Under its reviving influence they had steeped themselves once again in that stream of culture and civilisation which had been flowing perennially through the heart of Bengal....The main problem for their consideration, therefore, was this—how to develop fully and adequately the newly awakened national life of Bengal" (pp. 99-100).

16. "As early as 1817 the Hindus of Calcutta were so enthusiastic for the new learning that they founded the Hindu College at their own expense. In 1823 when the (East India) Company opened a College (the Sanskrit College) to teach traditional studies, some Bengalis urged

that European science and the English language should be taught there. By now there was undoubtedly a strong demand for English education" (Anil Seal--*The Emergence of Indian Nationalism,* Cambridge University Press, 1971; p. 17)..

Rev. Lalbehari Day (1824-1894) was brought from Burdwan to Calcutta because his father could see that 'for gaining a decent livelihood, a knowledge of the English language was absolutely necessary'.

17. Rabindranath Tagore—*Reminiscences.* Macmillan (first published in July 1917), Indian edition, 1966; p. 140.

18. Ibid, p. 148.

19. Ibid, pp. 182 & 184.

II. The Early Life

NARENDRANATH BHATTACHARYA (WHO LATER BECAME FAMOUS as M. N. Roy) was born in a priestly family. His father, Dinabandhu Bhattacharya, was the last in the line of high priests at the temple of the goddess *Ksheputeswari,* in the village *Ksheput,* in Midnapur district in South Bengal. The disruption of the family began when Dinabandhu, the elder member of the family entrusted to be the high priest,[1] left the village and took the job of Sanskrit teacher in a school in Arbelia, a village in the eastern part of 24 Parganas district near Calcutta. M. N. Roy, his fourth child—second by his second wife—was born in Arbelia on 21st March 1887[2]. Dinabandhu moved to Changripota after his retirement, the village his second wife came from, about 12 miles south of Calcutta, in the same district 24 Parganas, in the year 1899.

The group of villages, Changripota, Kodalia, Harinavi and Rajpur, was fervent with new ideas and social movement. Here were born and lived many of the social and religious reformers of nineteenth century Bengal, notable among them, Rajnarain Bose (maternal grand-father of Sri Aurobindo and Barin Ghosh); Dwarkanath Vidyabhusan, the famous editor of *Som Prakasa* and associate of Pandit Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar; and Dwarkanath's nephew Pandit Sivanath Sastri. Sastri, a great scholar of nineteenth century, tore off his Brahmanic sacred thread, to join the new reformist movement, Brahmo Samaj. He was an uncle of Roy's mother and had perceptible influence on the younger members of the family. Rajnarain Bose and Sivanath Sastri made the first attempt at founding a secret revolutionary society in late nineteenth century.

Another man who wielded influence on young Roy was the former Head Master of the local school, also a Brahmo, Umesh Datta. Roy revived the local library which Datta had founded in memory of Dwarkanath Vidyabhusan.

Roy's cousin and life-long political associate, Hari Kumar Chakravarty wrote "Young Naren (M. N. Roy) was adventure-loving when he came to know him in 1899. He loved to walk long distances and wander about from orchard to orchard. He was constantly searching for something distant, something beyond, and spent many nights in the cremation ground, which later became his favourite spot for secret meetings of his revolutionary group"[3].

Love for adventure and quest for the unknown made him restless. He often walked all the way from Changripota to Belur Math, founded by Swami Vivekananda, a distance of about 30 miles and other *ashramas* and *maths* in his quest for knowledge and truth. He began studying Sanskrit and ancient Indian texts from his father at an early age.

Sometime in early 1901, young Naren met Sivnarain Swami, reportedly a fugitive from the abortive Sepoy Mutiny of 1857, who believed that Hindu society had gone down because of caste divisions and many other ills it has imbibed through centuries of stagnation. Sivnarain Swami was trying to find men whom he could train for the resurrection of Hindu society. He was impressed by young Naren's dedication and gave him lessons in *Yoga* as well as revolutionary politics.[3a] The yearning of young Naren to unravel the mysteries of nature however went on increasing and he continued his lessons from Sivnarain Swami, who was a worshipper of Sun and stood against social discrimination. One day Naren told Harikumar, "the Sun is the giver of all energies and I want to know what this primal force is"[4].

Yet the soul of the restless young man was not satisfied.

He went from one *sadhu* to another, from one *ashram* to another, while practising *Yoga*. It was during this quest for truth and knowledge that Naren came to the famous *Vaishnava Sadhu* of the time, Ramdas Babaji, and began taking lessons from him. Ramdas Babaji, like Roy's former guru Sivnarain Swami, was so impressed by young Naren's dedication that he too wanted to make him his chief disciple and a sanyasi.[5]

But Naren's quest continued. His was not a mere seeking of religious truth, his mind was groping for things more real, down to earth, and he wanted to do something. One night in the winter of 1903-4 during this quest for truth, Naren told Harikumar and Saileswar[6], "We have to do something".[7] The three friends decided to leave their homes before dawn the next morning to find out the true path and meaning for truth.[8] It was on this trip that Naren went to Arbelia and met his cousin Avinash Bhattacharya. Avinash, who had already joined the revolutionary centre, East Club, founded by Jatindranath Banerjee, gave him political ideas—the country's call for the formation of revolutionary centres to fight for freedom. On his return Naren called his friends and organised such a centre at Changripota. This group later became a strong base of Jatin Mukherjee and played a vital role in the organization of armed uprising in the wake of the first world war.

Before his death in May 1905, Dinabandhu told his eldest son, Sushil, "Dona[9] has high ambitions, take care of him"[10].

In 1905, when Naren was a high school student, Bengal was in a state of intense political ferment. The immediate cause was the decision of the British Viceroy, Lord Curzon to partition the province of Bengal. The revolutionary movement in Bengal was "worked on the top of what is known as the anti-partition agitation".[11] Young Bengal, under the impact of resurgent Hindu militancy, chose the path of violence in opposition to the elder statesmen's policy of meetings and petitions. Their idealism was provided by Bankim Chandra and Swami Vivekananda[12].

At the annual session of the Indian National Congress in 1905, Sister Nivedita, Vivekananda's abbot associate and a product of Irish nationalism, urged that attainment of political freedom should be the objective of the Indian people instead of individual *mukti* (salvation). For the first time, Bankim Chandra's poem, *Bande Mataram,* was sung at the opening of the Congress; and in 1905, Aurobindo wrote the pamphlet, *Bhawani Mandir,* laying down the ideals and methods of impending revolution.

Naren arranged a public meeting against partition of Bengal in Kodalia and requested the new Head Master of the school for permission to hold the meeting in the school compound. When that permission was refused, Naren decided to organise a procession in honour of the guest speaker, Surendranath Banerjee[13] and hold the meeting outside the school. But the wrath of the new government circular prohibiting students from participating in anti-partition meetings and demonstrations fell on Naren and his seven friends, including Harikumar and Saileswar and they were expelled from the school. Naren at this time told Harikumar: "The British cannot be driven out through meetings and demonstrations. They have to be driven out by force."[14]

About the time, Ramdas Babaji sent for Naren and Hari-Kumar to persuade them to seek spiritual path. "He talked with us the whole night", wrote Harikumar, "but his words fell on deaf ears. We had decided our course. Vivekananda's path was our path. Our god was our country. We had now before us the vision of Bankim Chandra's 'Mother that she would become' ".[15]

Naren and Harikumar then met Swami Saradananda of Belur Math who used to take classes on *Gita* in the Anushilan Samiti, the major centre for revolutionaries founded in 1902. They were introduced to the Samiti's Secretary, Satish Bose. and they joined the Samiti as active members. In 1905 and 1906 Naren and Harikumar lived in the central office of the Samiti at 49 Cornwallis Street (now renamed Bidhan Sarani).[16] They soon expanded this group and formed a branch of the Samiti in Changripota.

Naren then took an active part in expanding the organization of the Anushilan Samiti in different parts of Bengal. When Nalini Kar, a close associate of Jatin Mukherjee first met Naren at the Samiti's central office in 1906, Naren had just returned from Malda in north Bengal where he had gone for organizational work.[17]

Next year Naren was sent by the Anushilan Samiti to Jaipore in Orissa to organise relief work in Ruriahat camp. Naren was in charge of 12 centres. One of his fellow-workers, Dr. Aswini Roy told me, "one day I observed that Naren did not eat anything at the end of the day's work. After all the volunteers had finished their meal in the evening I saw Naren walking up to the top of the dam wall. Here he sat in the posture of a yogi fixing his gaze on the moon. When he came down I asked him why he did this. After repeated requests, Naren told me, "Aswini, I am born in a poor family. There are so many great men in different part of the world—I will never be able to meet them. So I look at the moon hoping that through the moon I may have some communication with them."[18]

Naren also evinced keen interest in writing while in Anushilan Samiti. He used to frequently visit Kalinath Roy (later Editor of the *Tribune,* Lahore), then sub-editor of *The Bengalee* and also Panchanan Majumdar of *New India.*[19] We do not have much evidence of his journalistic products of that period; but according to one insider, in 1907 he wrote an article under the caption "Bharater Raja Ke?" (Who is India's Ruler?) in *Jugantar,* the revolutionary journal founded by Barin Ghosh, Avinash Bhattacharya and Bhupen Datta. In that article Naren wrote: "The voice of the people is the voice of god" and concluded that "it is only the people of India who can choose their ruler. The British have imposed their rule over India by force, and it is the birthright of the Indian people to defy and throw off the rule of the British from the country".[20]

Some time in 1907 Naren met Jatin Mukherjete and the two soon became very close. Describing the dramatic turning point, M. N. Roy later wrote: "At that time I did not know what was the attraction. ...later on, I realised what attracted me: It was his personality. Since then I have had the privilege of meeting outstanding personalities of our time. These were great men. Jatinda was a good man and I still have to find a better."[21]

Soon after the meeting, Naren and Harikumar went to Chhedapahar hills in Bankura in South-West Bengal to learn bomb-making and rifle shooting. They soon organised a group of about 40/50 revolutionaries who believed in 'direct action'.[22]

In the latter part of 1907 a series of political dacoities and terrorist activities took place inspired by the three journals, *Sandhya*, *Jugantar*, and *Bande Mataram*.[23] The first such dacoity was committed by Naren at the Changripota Railway Station on 6th December 1907. Naren absconded, but was arrested when he came home following his mother's illness. She died in January 1908.

The bomb throwing at the carriage in which Mr. and Mrs. Kennedy were returning home from the club in Muzaffarpur, mistaking that the "notorious" Governor Kingsford was in the carriage, led to the arrest of Kshudiram Bose and the discovery of the underground conspiratorial centre at Manicktala in eastern Calcutta. In November 1908, Nandalal Banerjee, an officer in the Intelligence Branch of the Bengal Police was shot dead by Naren for arresting Kshudiram.[24] Kshudiram was hanged for the 'crime'. The discovery of underground conspiratorial centre at Manicktola led to the arrest of Aurobindo, Barin and others in the Alipore Conspiracy case. According to Intelligence report, Naren "was said to have lived with Aravinda Ghosh, but on the latter's arrest in 1908, he left for Murshidabad".[25]

The arrest of Aurobindo Ghosh, Barin Ghosh and others, the retirement of Aurobindo from active politics into recluse of religion following his acquittal and the long-term imprisonment of Barin Ghosh and his group followed by the ban on Anushilan Samiti brought about disruption in the ranks of the revolutionaries. It was at this time that Naren and Jatin Mukherjee began organisational work and revolutionary activities and became close associates. Two centres were established, one was the

M. N. Roy (as Naren Bhattacharya) in 1910

M. N. Roy (as Rev. Charles A. Martin) 1916

"Sramajibi Samabaya" headed by Amerendra Nath Chattopadhyay[26] and the other in the name of "S. D. Harry & Sons" from where Harikumar Chakravarty began to operate.

Several dacoities were committed by Naren to raise funds for political activities. It was from this time that Naren rose in the hierarchy of leadership. With his untiring energy, he contacted different leaders and groups to forge coordination. In fact, Naren initiated a new beginning. Aurobindo retired from politics, Barin and his group were jailed and languished in the Andamans and the Anushilan Samiti and its affiliated bodies were banned. Naren began to build from what was left over.

Naren carried on political discussions with various groups and was preparing for a guerilla type warfare to drive the British out of this country. Interviewed by this author, Nirvan Swami, who met Naren frequently in those days and was later in charge of conducting the defence case in the Howrah Conspiracy case, as an absconding accused, said: "Naren's political thinking was much ahead of others...Naren held socialistic views and never mixed religion with politics." He continued: "Naren used to talk about what kind of government he wanted in replacement of the British rule and talked in terms of a people's government".[27] Another fellow-revolutionary, Bhupati Majumdar, who later became a Minister in West Bengal Government, after independence, told me "Naren was our leader in those days and talked politics in a much more advanced way than most of us. Naren had very radical ideas about rural economy."

Another Intelligence officer, Shamsul Alam, who was then preparing to arrest all the revolutionaries and commit them for trial in one conspiracy case, was murdered by Biren Dutta Gupta, one of Jatin Mukherjee's associates. This led to the arrests in what is known as the Howrah Conspiracy case. Altogether 44 persons including Naren and Jatin Mukherjee were arrested in this case on or about 29th January 1910. The committal order charged the accused persons that "between the Christian years 1905 and 1910, both inclusive, at Shibpur in the district of Howrah and at other places in India, did conspire with one another and other persons...to wage war against His Majesty the King Emperor and deprive the King-Emperor of the sovereigntly of British India". The Prosecution charged that "a large number of crimes of a political nature, collection of arms and ammunitions, and attempt to tamper with the loyalty of some sepoys of the 10th Jat Regiment and a large number of dacoities carried out by 'bhadralogs' with the object of securing funds for the purpose of the conspiracy".[28]

It was in the jail during the trial of this case that the group formed the nucleus of what came to be known as the most militant group of nationalist revolutionaries. The group foresaw the possibility of a world war and timed their guerrilla war to be launched at that time expecting assistance from Germany. The earlier revolutionaries did not concern themselves with anything beyond terrorising British administrators. The idea was primarily mooted by Barin Ghosh. Barin's object was "to stir up the revolutionary fervour of the Bengalis". Hence when police arrived at the Manicktola garden to arrest Barin and his group, Barin said his "mission was over".

The Howrah conspirators, in sharp distinction from their Manicktola compatriots, were not content with mere terrorism and held much deeper political motives and aspirations. The Howrah case revealed that the groups were actively planning an insurrection against the government through,—*first,* building a nucleus of organisational network throughout Bengal, maintaining links with other parts of the country; *second,* raising funds for political purposes through dacoities; *third,* by establishing links with the Indian sepoys in the British Indian army, and *fourth,* through procuring fire-arms for the army of liberation. The Howrah conspirators were released after about a year for want of sufficient evidence and thence-forward began the intense organisational activity of Naren.

In 1906 Jatindranath Banerjee who started the East Club in 1902 gave up active politics in Bengal, became a *sanyasi* and went to U.P. and Punjab to preach revolution. Banerjee was able to convert Ajit Singh and his brother Kissen Singh (father of Bhagat Singh). Lala Hardayal on his return to India in 1908 also became interested in the programme of the Bengal revolutionaries through Kissen Singh, went to America in 1911 and published a journal in the name of *Ghadr* (Rebellion). He also established a centre in the name of *Yugantar Ashram.*

After Hardayal's arrest in America on charge of being an 'anarchist' on 16th March 1914, he escaped to Switzerland when Ramchandra took charge of the journal and the Ashram. Satyen Sen joined the group in San Francisco at that time. Sen was sent to America by Jatin Mukherjee to make contacts with *Ghadr Party.*[29] In November 1914 Satyen Sen returned to Calcutta with information about support from the Sikh community in USA and Canada and introduced their leader, Kartar Singh to Naren and Jatin Mukherjee in Calcutta.[30]

Meanwhile in Calcutta the German Consul General contacted the Bengal revolutionaries through D. Thibault, then Registrar of Calcutta University on the eve of the first world war and Naren went to talk to him.[31] After discussion with the German diplomat, Naren brought Jatin Mukherjee from Jessore, where he was engaged in business, to Calcutta. The German Consul General then reported to Berlin that "the activities of the secret revolutionary societies (were) very significant, especially those of Bengal" and recommended that his "Government should avail itself of this opportunity of undermining British power and should help these revolutionaries actively."[32]

Naren and Jatin Mukherjee then held several meetings with other revolutionaries and discussed plans for armed insurrection in India on the outbreak of war. Naren argued that the British forces in India would be so depleted during the war that there would be very little British force left to resist the revolutionaries and all steps will be taken to stop reinforcements brought from outside. The elaborate plan for attacking the Fort William in Calcutta and blowing up bridges and railways was later revealed in the Seditions Committee report of 1918.

Jatin Mukherjee was then elected Supreme Commander in a hurriedly called meeting of different groups and leaders of Bengal; and on 26th August 1914, 10 cases of arms and ammunitions containing 50 Mauser pistols and 46,000 rounds of ammunition were looted from Rodda and Company, an arms dealer. A secret hideout was then arranged by Naren for training of the revolutionary leaders and on 12th February 1915 Naren looted the cash of the Bird and Company in a daring dacoity in broad daylight—which came to be known as the sensational Garden Reach Dacoity.

The Germans then asked the Bengal revolutionaries to send a representative to Batavia to work out the details of the plan for arms delivery. Naren went to Batavia in April 1915 under the adopted name of C. A. Martin as an agent of Harry and Sons. The link between Calcutta and Batavia was maintained through Harry and Sons. Meanwhile, it was decided to find a secret hideout for Jatin Mukherjee which Naren and a fellow-revolutionary, Nalini Kar, arranged at Mohandia in Orissa about 22 miles from Balasore. Jatin Mukherjee was provided with four armed guards equipped with mauser pistols and proper ammunition.

Naren returned from his first trip in the middle of June making arrangements to receive the cargo of S. S. Maverick at Rai Mangal, a remote island in the Sunderbans in Southern Bengal. The cargo did not arrive. So Naren made his second trip to Batavia in August. Before going on his second trip Naren met Jatin Mukherjee at this Mohandia hideout and promised not to return without arms. Jatin Mukherjee told Naren at this second farewell meeting: "Come back, with or without arms".

While passing through Manila, Naren read the report about Jatin Mukherjee's death in an encounter with the British police on 9th September 1915. On receipt of the news his immediate resolve was that "Jatinda's death must be avenged". He travelled through the entire South-East Asia to find arms for the Indian revolution and avenge Jatinda's death.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. M. N. Roy—Disintegration of a Priestly Family; *The Radical Humanist,* February 7, 1954.

2. Based on recording in his diary by M. N. Roy's father, Dinabandhu Bhattacharya which was shown to me by Roy's younger brother Lalit Kumar Bhattacharya. The author regrets that in his book, *The Restless Brahmin* : Early Life of M. N. Roy (1970) there was a slight error of one month in the computation of the date on the English calender from the Bengali.

3. Harikumar Chakravarty—"Manabendranath Smarane" (In Remembrance of Manabendranath), Calcutta, 1956; p. 3-4

3a. My interview with Alok Chakravarty. See also Muzaffar Ahmad—*The Communist Party of India and its Formation Abroad;* National Book Agency, Calcutta; April 1962; pp. 66-67.

4. Harikumar Chakravarty's article titled "Biplabi Andolaney Swamijir Prabhab" (Swamiji's influence in Revolutiorary Movement) in *Viswa-Vivek,* Vak Sahitya; Calcutta, 2nd edition, 1966; p. 255

5. Ibid, p. 255

6. Saileswar Bose, also belonging to Changripota, opened the shop, "Universal Emporium" at Balasore as the communication centre between Harikumar Chakravarty's "Harry and Sons" in Calcutta and Jatin Mukherjee's hideout at Mohandia, 22 miles from Balasore at the time of the planned insurrection in 1915.

7. Harikumar, Op. Cit, p. 6

8. Ibid, p. 6

9. Pet name of M. N. Roy by which his father used to call him.

10. Interview with Lalit Bhattacharya on 19 November 1967.

11. Sir Charles Tegart · *Terrorism in India* (Speech at the Royal Empire Society on 1 November 1932) p. 7

12. Harikumar Chakravarty's article in *Viswa-Vivek*

13. Surendranath Banerjee (1848-1925), came to be known as the "Father of Indian Nationalism" and is the author of the book, "A Nation in Making", first published from Calcutta in 1925

14. Kalicharan Ghosh, a young associate of M. N. Roy and the Changripota group, and author of *"The Roll of Honour"* and other books on the militant nationalist movement of Bengal, told me on 18 April 1968.

15. Harikumar in *Viswa-Vivek,* Op. Cit., p. 254

16. Dr. Jadugopal Mukherjee in his preface to my book, *The Restless Brahmin* : Early Life of M. N. Roy, wrote that he met Naren (M. N. Roy) and Harikumar Chakravarty at the Anushilan Samiti, where they both often lived, in 1905.

17. Nalini Kar, a close associate of Jatin Mukherjee, told me in course of interviews on 18 and 19 April 1968: "Satish Bose (Secretary of the Samiti) introducing Naren-da to me in 1906 said, 'Naren has just returned from Malda (a distance of about 250 miles from Calcutta) on foot, after doing some organizational work there'."

18. My interview with Dr. Aswini Roy on 6 and 11 April 1968.

19. My interview with Sarat Chandra Ghosh. Ghosh believed that Naren (Roy) used to write for the journals.

20. As told to me by Nirvan Swami who quoted the text from memory. I have not been able to procure a copy of the journal, although several Jugantar revolutionaries confirmed that such an article by Naren had in fact appeared in *Jugantar*.

21. M. N. Roy—"Jatin Mukherjee", *Independent India*, 27 February 1949.

22. Interview with Aloke Chakravarty on several dates from 12 November 1967 to 2nd January 1968.

23. *Sandhya* was edited by Brahmabandhav Upadhyaya, *Jugantar* by Barin Ghosh's associates and *Bande Mataram* by Aurobindo Ghosh.

24. Bhupendra Kumar Dutta, a later leader of Jugantar group, wrote to Aloke Chakravarty on 16 June 1963; "Naren Bhattacharya, Bhusan Mitra and Naren Bose of Atmonnati Samiti shot Nandalal Banerjee, the Police agent, who was sent to arrest Kshudiram Bose".

Roy later wrote:

"I had the privilege of knowing Kshudiram. I met him and Prafulla (Chaki) on the eve of their pilgrimage. ......With pioneers like Kshudiram, nationalism was a religion,......For them, patriotism was not the path to power. It was *tapasya,* a mystc experience of self-abnegation. Kshudiram himself was the gentlest of souls imaginable.......In a trance, a psychological state of the mystic *Karmayogi,* he started on his fatal pilgrimage; the bomb on his box and the pistol in his pocket were not the means to destroy human life; they were as flowers with which the devotee goes to the temple to please and propitiate the god." (Independent India, April 17, 1949)

25. History Sheet No. 687 of Narendra Nath Bhattacharji, Bengal File No. 324 of 1909 prepared by L. N. Bird, Special Assistant, Intelligence Branch, CID.

26. Naren was introduced to Amarendranath Chattopadhyaya by Jatin Mukherjee in 1908 with the comment: "Naren is an agnostic"—wrote Amarendranath Chattopadhyaya in his commemorative article on M. N. Roy in *"M. N. Roy: Philosopher-Revolutionary"*; Renaissance Publishers, Calcutta, 1984.

27. Interview with Nirvan Swami (alias Satish Sarkar) on 21 and 22 January 1968 and other dates.

28. Calcutta Weekly Notes: CWN, Vol. XV, p. 596

29. Prithwin Mukherjee's serialised biography of Jatin Mukherjee published in *Basumati* (Bengali Weekly); 9 September 1965 to 24 February 1966; p. 1245

30. B. B. Mazumdar—*Militant Nationalism in India*; p. 167

31. My interview with Satish Chakravarty, then leader of the Calcutta group of Jugantar, whom Thibault communicated the information at the residence of Sir Asutosh Mukherjee, then Vice-Chancellor of Calcutta University.

32. Photostat copy of this telegram is part of the micro-filmed record of the German Foreign Office, now available at the National Archives in New Delhi.

III. New Name, New Life

THE 22 PAGES NARRATING ROY'S STAY IN THE USA ARE THE least communicating part of his *Memoirs*. There is so little information in the Memoirs about his sojourn of over 300 days in the USA, that details are being filled in by recent investigations.

Briefly the main incidents are : arrival in San Francisco on June 15, 1916, flight to Palo Alto the following day, assumption of the new name, meeting with Evelyn Trent, residence in Los Angeles (September), journey to New York (October), marriage with Evelyn in New York either before or after arrest there, stay with Lala Lajpat Rai and in Greenwich village, talks with American Radicals and Socialists, study of Marxism, arrest in New York, jumping the bail and flight to the Texas-Mexican border (March 1917), and finally finding refuge in Mexico city by the middle of June 1917.

During the ten months that Roy had taken to reach San Francisco after leaving India, he had been tailed by British Intelligence. So thoroughly had he been tracked that the morning after his landing at San Francisco he read a report in a local newspaper headlined, "Mysterious Alien Reaches America, Famous Brahmin Revolutionary or Dangerous German Spy".

Roy had chosen to go to California, firstly because the offer of German arms to Indian revolutionaries had been routed

Dhangopal Mukherjee

Mrs. Dhangopal Mukherjee
(Courtesy : Dr. Siddharta Mukherjee)

David Starr Jordan, 1917

Agnes Smedly as a student of Arizona State University in 1914
Courtesy : Prof. Steve MacKinnon

through Indians in California, secondly he was enroute to Berlin to negotiate with the German authorities about funds on a new proposal to buy arms from China[1] and California was on the route to Europe from Japan where he was last, and thirdly because Dhangopal, younger brother of fellow-revolutionary, Jadugopal Mukherjee, was resident there. These facts were probably known to British Intelligence, and G. C. Denham, a senior Intelligence Officer in the Bengal Police, was sent to USA. Denham was to seek extradition of Roy from the USA, and if not extradition, at least his expulsion as an alien.[2]

Between 1859 and 1910 a small Indian population had grown up in Canada and USA ; around 10,000 by the time Roy reached that continent. In 1906, Barkatullah, who was later to become the President of a free Indian Government in exile set up in Afghanistan, founded with S. L. Joshi, a Pan-Aryan Association. Barkatullah left for Japan in 1909 but the work was carried on by the Indo-American National Association in California, set up by Ramnath Puri.

Several Indian organizations set up around this time on West coast became active because they had a populous and relatively affluent base in Indian settlors. Puri's Association came up in 1907-8. Its work was supplemented by Taraknath Das, a fugitive like Roy, bringing out a journal, *Free Hindusthan,* from Vancouver in Canada, later shifting to nearby Seattle in the USA where British hints were less seriously taken note of by the local authority.

In 1913 two organizations came up : The Pacific Coast Hindusthani Association at Oregon and the *Ghadr* at San Francisco, helped a great deal by the presence of Lala Hardayal[3] between 1911 and 1914. The other Ghadr activist was Ramchandra, a fugitive again, who had reached San Francisco in 1913. Restrictions on Indian emigration to Canada and USA —two countries which provided the greatest opportunities—encouraged the growth of the West Coast organizations. The voyage of *Kamagata Maru,* a Japanese ship chartered by Indians, and the violence associated with it,[4] hardened the will of the expatriate Indians to achieve a status of honourable existence for themselves.

A group had come up in Berlin too which received encouragement from the Kaiser's government of Germany, and after the outbreak of the first world war, political and financial support. The Berlin Committee of Indian revolutionaries, which underwent several changes in nomenclature, became the dominant group because of the funds it commanded. It was ready to buy arms in neutral America and transport them in neutral bottoms for an armed uprising in India. So started funding the Ghadr in San Francisco. Champakram Pillai was the originator of the Berlin group in October 1914, and secured its attachment to the German General Staff. Its most intelligent organizer was Virendranath Chattopadhyaya, brother of Sarojini Naidu, an important woman nationalist leader in India. Taraknath Das, Barkatullah, Herambalal Gupta, Bhupendranath Datta, brother of Swami Vivekananda and Hardayal, who came from USA to join it were its other important leaders. By the middle of 1915 the Indian Independence Committee was organized with Dr. Mohammed Mansoor[5] as its President.

The Berlin Committee funded the *Ghadr* in San Francisco but maintained a representative in New York who was to be in close contact with the German Embassy. The contact was through Franz von Papen, the military Attache. In San Francisco the contact was through Franz Bopp,[6] the Consul General and William von Brincken his military Attache[7]. Von Papen, the Military Attache at the German Embassy in USA, arranged for the purchase of 8000 rifles and 4 million rounds of ammunition for Indian revolutionaries. The consignment was ready for shipment in January 1915 and loaded on a ship *Anne Larsen* which sailed on March 8, 1915 fron San Diego in California ostensibly for a Mexican port but really for the island of Socorro 300 miles to the south.

At that island the arms were to be transhipped to another ship *Maverick* and taken to Batavia. Jitendra Nath Lahiri brought the information about the shipment to Calcutta, and Roy (then Narendra Nath Bhattacharya) went to Batavia in April

1915 to guide the *Maverick* to India so that the arms could be delivered in the Sunderbans in south Bengal by July 13, 1915. Roy returned to India in the middle of June, but the *Maverick* did not arrive.

The *Marverick* sailed from San Pedro, another Californian port, on April 23, 46 days after its scheduled date. But a minor mutiny and a storm had driven *Anne Larsen* to an American port where its arms were seized. After a circuitous voyage the *Maverick* arrived in Batavia but without the arms and was seized by the Dutch authorities. The super cargo, John Starr-Hunt and four Indians, who were aboard the ship escaped but were caught at Singapore. The Indians were executed and Starr Hunt after a short stay in Batavia returned to USA to testify at the San Francisco trial.[8] Roy met Starr Hunt in Batavia, on his second visit to Batavia towards the end of August, before he reached Manila where he learned of Jatin Mukherjee's death on 9th September. From there Roy proceeded to Japan and China and finally towards USA to negotiate another arms deal.

By the time Roy arrived in San Francisco in June 1916 much had happened to encourage him to reconsider the attitudes which he probably had accepted as natural in the Indian environment. The most important event was the death of Jatin Mukherjee. Writing 35 years later in his *Memoirs* Roy recorded : "Jatinda's death had absolved me from the moral obligation to obey the order".[9] The realisation may not have come immediately but it was slowly growing—the loosening of ties which bound him to older men and their ideas.

Between his two trips abroad in search of arms, Roy had paid a visit to Aurobindo Ghosh at Pondicherry in an attempt to induce the revolutionary turned hermit to return to political activity.[10] Roy failed, but the event could not but have made an impact on him. If the *Karmayogi*—the ideal of the activist that the revolutionaries had adopted from Vivekananda—could withdraw into religion others could change their roles too.

The next disappointment came in Japan when Rashbehari Bose and the Chinese leader Dr. Sun Yat-Sen told him to defer any activity for Indian independence till such time as Japan was ready to take over the active leadership of the pan-Asian movement. We have no idea about Roy's attitude to the pan-Asian movement while he was a young man in Calcutta, if he had any, but he rejected it when Dr. Sun Yat-Sen and Rashbehari Bose (an erstwhile co-revolutionary) asked him to wait for the liberation of India till Japan assumed the leadersship of Asia.[11]

The distaste for Japanese leadership might have arisen from other reasons too—but the distaste was strong enough to have lasted a lifetime. One of the reasons for his dislike might be that the Japanese police trailed him, at the instance of the British, in spite of Japan's being neutral. This same police surveillance subsequently made him unresponsive to the USA also.[12] The second reason was that neither Dr. Sun Yat-Sen nor Rashbehari Bose appreciated the urgency with which he was seized, and were putting off action to a later date.

These was a third reason. On his voyage across the Pacific, Roy found the Japanese behaving like members of a superior race. Yet the same Japanese on approaching Honolulu discarded their national costume and were most correctly clad in European suits. Roy had an Indian companion in the ship, a Miss Gray, a Tamil orphan brought up by American missionaries, who made caustic remarks about this "apishness of the Japs". Miss Gray may not have influenced Roy to any great extent but Roy remembered this when he wrote his *Memoirs* nearly 35 years later.

Roy also remembered that Miss Gray was "enthralled" by his "cosmopolitanism".[13] That was the first time anybody praised him for cosmopolitanism and Roy wrote about the compliment in his *Memoirs*. Miss Gray's remark contained the germ of an idea which later became one of the motivations of Roy.

On June 15, 1916 Naren Bhattacharya, under the pseudonym, Rev. Charles Martin, landed in San Francisco and a day later joined Dhangopal Mukherjee at Palo Alto, the locale of Stanford University, where Dhangopal was probably a graduate student then. The host was a younger brother of a close revolutionary colleague, Jadugopal Mukherjee, and had come out to America via Japan in 1908 at the age of 16. He was still in his twenties but had attracted attention as a poet and writer of children's books.

Dhangopal was well thought of at Stanford, and Naren made several important contacts. One of these was the Pacifist Chancellor of the University, Dr. David Starr Jordan, and the other a 'young and attractive' graduate student, Evelyn Trent, possibly a contemporary of Dhangopal at Stanford. A third was Arthur Upham Pope, who taught Philosophy at the University of California at Berkeley. He was introduced to these new friends by the new name he adopted, Manabendra Nath Roy.

The adoption of new name was probably prearranged before he left India and was to be a signal for his revolutionary colleagues to know that he had safely arrived in USA. His new name, Manabendra Nath, were just synonyms of the first two original names, Narendra Nath. The adopted surname was significant. It was not a caste name as was 'Bhattacharya', though many Brahmins used it. 'Roy' was symbolic of a break with orthodoxy, though at that time the significance might have been submerged under considerations of expediency—the need to cover up his trail as an exile. The change can be interpreted as a subconscious shift from Hindu nationalism—for the Roys in India were those who had associated themselves with the Muslim State the British had supplanted.

Stanford was chosen because of Dhangopal Mukherjee but it was also the place where Hardayal had lived and established contacts with the Anarchists. Dhangopal was for a time under their influence.[14]

Evelyn Trent, whom Roy met through Dhangopal, had entered Stanford in 1911 and graduated in English in 1915.[15] Though details about Evelyn are lacking, it would be a reasonable presumption that she had romantic ideas about Indians. Roy, tall, dark and handsome, filled this role, and for the following nine years there was a remarkable collaboration between the two apart from being man and wife.

The ten months that Roy spent in America were extremely hurried and tense, and indeed became hysterical following his arrest and that of several others involved in the Indian freedom movement. Roy later admitted that his stay in America was too brief and hurried for him to react to that country and the record we have is disinterestedness in America. Yet, he might have been influenced by America in spite of himself.

By the time Roy reached San Francisco, the Socialist Party in America, founded in 1900 with about 10,000 members, had swelled into a large organization. By 1912 the membership stood at over 100,000, the party had been able to secure the election of some 1200 members to public offices, and as many as 300 Socialist periodicals appeared. *The Appeal to Reason,* a weekly journal published in Kansas reached a circulation of 761,747 by 1913.[16] Enthusiasm for socialism was quite fervid in the opening years of the first world war specially among immigrants who were opposed to American participation in the war, and this could not have escaped Roy's notice as his own freedom from harassment was largely dependent upon USA staying out of war. European socialists, on the other hand, had by and large taken sides and adopted patriotic stances.

Roy was not neutral; he counted upon German aid for liberating India, yet he expected the USA to treat him as neutral, and not hamper his activities. But as in Japan, the American police took their cue from their British counterparts. In addition there were American restrictions on immigrants from Asia, which probably hurt Roy's feelings and affected his activities. In the circumstances it would have been quite in order if Roy had misinterpreted the questions raised by American Radicals—about Indian capitalists exploiting the Indian working class after Independence—as a mere ruse to avoid involvement.

That would have been the nationalist reaction, and was in fact, the reaction of his senior, Lala Lajpat Rai, then in the USA to seek support from American liberals for the cause of Indian freedom. Yet those questions raised by the American Radicals had set Roy thinking and studying:[17] the nationalist moorings had been loosening.

Roy also found friends in America who were Pacifists, as much opposed to war as to imperialism. They were sympathetic to the Indian cause generally and to Roy personally. One of them, Dr. David starr Jordan (1851-1931), was prepared to look dispassionately at American interests in Mexico. For the first time Roy became acquainted with persons who were free of national obligation in their thought.

It seems possible that Roy had landed in America prepared to leave that country and find a refuge elsewhere, if needed. Dr. Jordan was prepared to make it easy for Roy to find a refuge in neighbouring Mexico, and gave him a letter of introduction to a personal but powerful friend, General Alvarado, a Socialist, in Mexico. The revolution in that country was young, and in its initial stages had met with hostility and threats of intervention from the USA. Dr. Jordan's letter of introduction for an Indian, a fugitive from both British and American police, could not but have impressed young Roy.

Among American intellectuals too there was considerable interest in and sympathy for India. At the University of California in Berkeley at that time there were several academics with interest in India. These included Charles Ricker, Arthur Ryder (who taught Sanskrit), Fritz Krueger (who taught Political Science), and Thomas Harrison Reed, besides Arthur Upham Pope. On the fringes of this academic circle were the danseuses Ruth St. Denis and Isadora Duncan and the writer Jack London.

Ruth, in collaboration with Indian revolutionaries, performed a ballet in 1913 based on Kalidasa's epic love story, *Shakuntala.* Jack London made Hardayal the central figure in his novel, *The Lady of the Big House* (1913) in which with names reversed, 'Dayal Har', he is described as "a revolutionary, of sorts".[18]

Out of the records of the San Francisco trial (July 7, 1917 —April 28, 1918) emerges the very interesting figure of Prof. Arthur Pope who taught Philosophy at Berkeley and had met Hardayal in 1911. Since that meeting Pope had become an ardent advocate of India's freedom and maintained contact with Indian revolutionaries During his stay at Palo Alto, Roy met

Pope and they became friends. Even after Roy's escape to Mexico, Pope remained his principal contact in the USA. Pope was interrogated during the San Francisco trial. He was induced to resign his Berkely post and later his teaching job at Amherst College. Subsequently he lost job in the War department too because of his connection with Roy, which however continued possibly till Roy left for Moscow.

In a memorandum on Professor Pope, the U. S. Attorney for Northern California District, a Mr. Preston wrote on April 2, 1918 :

> "...Even more sinister is Professor Pope's acquaintance with another Hindu revolutionary, Narendra Nath Bhattacharya. Narendra, a man steeped in crime, is one of the most violent revolutionaries India has produced. He was entrusted with the arrangements for the reception of the Maverick.....He came to San Francisco in the middle of 1916 under the false name of Martin...He stayed for sometime on the Pacific Coast, intriguing with German agents and Hindu conspirators both in San Francisco and Los Angeles. He afterwards went to New York, and was to have gone in the (German submarine) *Deutschland* to Germany to obtain sanction for a big deal in arms with a South China party. The scheme fell through, and when the Federal authorities took action against conspirators in New York, Roy fled to Mexico under the name of Manuel Mendez....altogether he is the most dangerous Indian still at large on the American subcontinent. There is no reason why Mr. Pope should have anything to do with this personage."

Poverty, bad relations with fellow Indian revolutionaries and being constantly shadowed by British and American agents[19] were not conducive for a happy stay in New York. Roy had to move constantly from one place to another. Roy and Evelyn had also to frequently stay apart because a brother of Evelyn, who lived in New York and was opposed to Evelyn's marrying a Hindu revolutionary, made things difficult for them. In such a situation, Roy stayed for sometime at the residence of the elder Indian politician, Lala Lajpat Rai. The Lala recorded in his diary:

> "In the meantime came M. N. Roy. He was represented to me as a revolutionary who had fled to take refuge in the U. S. But what interested me most was that during his stay in California he had fallen in love with an American girl who reciprocated his sentiment and asked to marry him. Her people would not listen to the proposal and the girl had consequently left their protection to follow Roy and share his fate. The girl happened to be a graduate of Leland Stanford University and had a brother in New York employed in some business firm. The Hindu boys in New York including Chakrabarty were disposed to consider M. N. Roy as a traitor to the cause in so far as he had fallen in love with the girl and consequently impaired his usefulness to the country. Some of them denounced him and Chakravarty insulted the girl when she one day went to his place to make enquiries about her lover. The minute the story was broken to me I expressed my sympathy with Roy and his girl. I opened my rooms to them and we began to exchange views. Roy was in dire need and I gave him in all 350 dollars out of which 50 were earned by Mrs. Roy in doing some work for me."[20]

However by mid-February the American Government was gearing up to join the war against Germany and thus gradually Roy's movements became increasingly difficult until he was arrested on March 7th, 1917.[21] Agnes Smedley, who was also arrested and interrogated in the Hindu-German conspiracy case and knew Roy in New York, quotes in her autobiographical novel *The Daughter of Earth,* an Indian revolutionary, "very dark, thin, tall and handsome, and very poor" telling her in New York, "British spies were following all Indians. Someone had entered his room while he was away the day before and had searched it".[22]

As soon as he obtained bail, Roy decided to escape to Mexico, not to evade the charge but because he knew he would be taken to San Francisco in connection with the conspiracy case there and would most likely be taken to India through deportation, for trial and imprisonment.[23]

Before he left USA, Roy had "accepted socialism, except its materialist philosophy", and had written a thesis on pacifism. The thesis was that "colonialism being the cause of war, liberation of the subject peoples--was the condition for durable peace". He rewrote the essay while in New York after his meetings and discussions with the socialists. The rewritten essay analysed the economic causes of war, which his socialist friends approved. Shortly thereafter he escaped to Mexico, and the rewritten essay titled "An Open Letter to His Excellency Woodrow Wilson, President of the United States of America: The way to Durable Peace" was published on April 17, 1917[24] when he had already left the USA and crossed into the Mexican border town Laredo. Roy wrote "Shortly thereafter I escaped imprisonment by fleeing to Mexico. There was no time to see my first socialist essay in print".[25] It was later published in Spanish from Mexico under the title "El Camina Para La Paz Duradera del Mundo."

The Spanish version contained passages about the Monroe Doctrine, which made Mexico a virtual colony of the USA. This was probably intended to be an expression of gratitude to the country which had offered him refuge, but it also led to a broadening of Roy's vision—political independence by itself was not enough. At least it had not proved enough for Mexico.

In Mexico, Roy was welcome because of Dr. Jordan's letter of introduction and because Mexico was in a mood to defy Britain. Mexico's President Carranza, after the Benton case, had described Britain as the "bully of the world". Benton was an aggressive Briton, holding mining and other concessions, who had come in conflict with the Mexican Government and had been shot dead by one of the followers of Pancho Villa. President Carranza was indebted to Villa for his elevation to the Presidency in spite of being a landowning aristocrat, and had resisted British attempt at bullying, including those routed through American diplomatic channels.

There was also in Mexico a certain amount of romantic sympathy for India derived from the local population being wrongly called 'Indian', and from the influence the Theosophist movement (started in New York in 1879) had on a section of the Mexican intelligentsia. Roy was domiciled among them. For a time the internal politics of Mexico did not interest him. He did not even visit Yucatan, the province where General Alvarado was supposed to have carried out remarkable land reforms.

From America to Mexico Roy was more interested in discovering a new civilization and relating himself to it. The instruments of discovery were various. In Mexico, German diplomats and tradesmen who wanted him to start an armed rebellion in India cultivated him.[26] Mexican intellectuals and journalists found him interesting. But the most vital contribution was made by American bohemians—writers, artists, cartoonists, Pacifists, Socialists and Radicals—the community of Slackers which took refuge in Mexico to escape conscription.

The link between this community and Roy was his American wife, Evelyn. In Autumn 1916 Roy had travelled with Evelyn to New York and visited Greenwich village. He had lived in New York and associated with Lajpat Rai. Events however happened rapidly in New York. There were the debates with the Radicals and the reading of texts, which included works of Karl Marx. There was his arrest, and as one version would have it, Evelyn married him while he was in the lock-up to prevent his extradition.[27] Then came the jumping of the bail and flight to Mexico.

But once in Mexico the influence on Roy of Lala Lajpat Rai and other Indians weakened. He did not have to live by Indian mores. The only speakers of English, the language he could converse in during the early months, were the American bohemians, and included the American wife of the German Consul. And through them he found his way into European civilization and culture.

The introduction was at two levels—the rich and the bourgeois who preferred to be orderly and formal; and the bohemians who gave primacy to spontaneity. Roy tended later to look at these contacts as part of his evolution into a communist or socialist. His actual development, however, was into a liberated intellectual.

On his first phase of intellectual growth Roy outgrew his cultural nationalism. Since, unlike Gandhi, he had no pathological sense of wonder either in his own self or his breaking away from cultural nationalism, there was no bitter struggle as with the Mahatma whose vow not to touch wine, meat or women while abroad caused serious emotional problems. It was the external world which enlarged Roy's vision through sensory stimulants—food he had not tasted before, works of art and musical compositions he had not known in India, and the intellectual organization of sensory impulses, as in understanding the difference between painting and photography.

The young American wife of the German Counsellor, Von Schoen, "took me under her protective wings". It was in Frau Von Schoen's salon that Roy met Maestro Cassas, the Rector of the University; the wife of a German merchant who was an artist and did a portrait of Roy and gave Roy lessons on art; Pablo Cazals, the great Cellist and his singer wife who taught Roy how to appreciate music. Roy observed "Everyday I became painfully conscious of how uneducated and ignorant I had been".[28]

Like other Indians, Roy brought his food taboos to America. He had remained a vegetarian and teetotaller, and ordered a beaf steak only when he was told in a posh Mexican restaurant that native food could only be served from cans, for none of the guests took Mexican food.[29] He took longer to break the drink taboo, and then only because of the persuasion of the bohemians.[30]

Although in his *Memoirs,* Roy deliberately omitted any mention of Evelyn, it would be reasonable to give her the credit for having introduced Roy to the Western style of living and the world of artists and writers. To induce Roy to accept artists and writers as they were was Evelyn's achievement.

This may seem a minor achievement. In the Indian context it was major. Only one notable Indian had mixed with Western writers and artists before Roy. That was Rabindranath Tagore, but not on his first visit to Europe. Only on the second, when he was already an established writer, did he make professional calls on colleagues. The painter Rothenstein was included because he had in Calcutta called on the poet's nephew who was a painter, and Rothenstein had already been Knighted. Tagore's was social intercourse among aristocrats, who were also poets and painters, not bohemian carefree intermingling. Roy was to write later: "In Mexico, we built up a small cosmopolitan community of free human being".[31]

Even before he reached Mexico, American Radicals and Pacifists had been able to induce Roy to look at the war a little less subjectively than before. In New York he had begun to "think of revolution as an international social necessity" and not just as a means for India's liberation. Yet, after all has been said about his American experience, its brevity and the associated tensions one fact remains true: Roy did not respond to America.[32]

While Roy talks about the role of American radicals in provoking him to look at Indian nationalism in a less complacent manner than he had been wont to, there are no radicals mentioned in his *Memoirs* except those whom he had met in Mexico. The saddest are those of Eugene Victor Debs, the leader of American socialism between 1900 and 1917, and Arthur Uphan Pope.

Debs had been a candidate for the American Presidency in each election since 1900, and in 1916 polled about a million votes, or six percent of the total—a creditable performance. Debs was editor of *Appeal to Reason* which Roy must have read as it opposed America's participation in the war. In 1917 Debs was jailed under the Espionage Act for ten years for a speech opposing America's joining the War. Debs' trial must have been well-known and often discussed in the American colony in Mexico. Besides, though Debs was resident in Kansas, he frequently visited New York. One can only conjecture about a meeting between Debs and Roy. Roy's later prejudices against the socialists might have been responsible for his silence about Debs in the *Memoirs*.

It can also be argued that the lurking Brahmin in Roy rejected the bourgeois culture of the 19th century—the culture of the USA—and looked back to the intellectual aristocracy of 18th century Europe. But Roy's full acquaintance with 18th century European thought occurred only later when he met Borodin and August Thalheimer, particularly the latter.

The refuge in Mexico gave Roy time to think without the compulsion for immediate action under which he had lived during the previous 13 years. It renewed contacts with the Germans but proved the impossibility of attempting any action in India; instead it opened the possibility of mobilization of Latin American States against the USA and strengthening the socialist movement in Mexico. None of these was as important as the meeting with Michael Borodin in the summer of 1919.

Before the meeting with Borodin, Roy had veered to socialism but had reservations about materialism. He ascribed the change to discussions with Borodin.[33] The truth however was that in conversations with Mexican academics and the Germans he was discovering a new world—the world of paintings and music, an awareness of art, of the presence of a spiritual life other than of rituals and devotions, and slowly the belief that India was spiritual and Europe materialistic was eroding. Mexico was more Europeanised than India, and European culture which had seemed remote at home became more palpable. Discussions with Borodin helped him to appreciate the history of European culture and how it had evolved. That was the core of the "materialism" that he imbibed while in Mexico. Upon that he could and did build later.

Roy later wrote: "Mexico was the land of my rebirth. It is true that before coming there I had begun to feel dissatisfied with ideas and ideals of my earlier life. But it was during my stay in Mexico that the new vision became clear and the dissatisfaction with a sterile past was replaced by a conviction to guide me in a more promising future. It was more than a change of political ideas and revolutionary ideals. I acquired a new outlook on life; there was a revolution in my mind—a philosophical revolution which knew no finality".[34]

Mexico also meant being freed from vows made and commitments undertaken as a lad of 17. This freedom accrued slowly over more than two years, but the cumulative effect was great, and at 32, Roy felt not only that he was an adult but also that he was free and heir to the entire human heritage without being hampered by national loyalties or boundaries. That was the "re-birth"; the adoption of a new name might have been the first step but it was not particularly decisive. Of course, later he became famous as M. N. Roy and joined a select band of internationally famous revolutionaries who too were better known by their adopted names. That was incidental; residence in a new country was more important. Roy later described his stay in Mexico as "having lived through a couple of centuries of cultural history." He was obviously implying thereby his own rejection of the hesitations and limitations of 19th century Bengal.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. After the failure of the Maverick to bring arms, Roy contacted a Chinese warlord through Sun Yat-sen to buy arms from him and send them through North-Eastern frontier of India to the Bengali revolutionaries. A concrete agreement was concluded. The German Ambassador in Peking then told Roy that he could not pay such a huge sum and Roy should get the necessary permission from Berlin. In order to go to Berlin to finalise the deal, Roy arrived in San Francisco via Pacific en route to Berlin. (See Roy *Memoirs,* Chapter—1, captioned "In Search of Arms through Asia").

2. Roy Memoirs, p. 64.

3. Emily Brown, *Har Dayal* : Hindu Revolutionary and Rationalist; The University of Arizona Press, 1975; p. 94 :, See also K. K. Banerjee, *Indian Freedom Movement Revolutionaries in America;* Jijnasa, Calcutta, 1969; pp. 1-12.

4. See : Samaren Roy, *The Restless Brahmin;* The Early Life of M. N. Roy; Allied, 1970; p. 61.

5. Tilak Raj Sareen, *Indian Revolutionary Movement Abroad* (1905-1921); Sterling Publishers, New Delhi; 1979; p. 124.

6. Franz Bopp, the German Consul General in San Francisco was the principal accused in the Hindu-German Conspiracy case at San Francisco which was officially mentioned as "USA versus Franz Bopp, German Consul General at San Francisco and others".

See also K. K. Banerjee, Op. cit. pp. 64-77.

7. William von Brincken, the military Attache at German Consulate General at San Francisco, was co accused with Bopp and also sentenced to 2 years. Brincken later wrote in *San Francisco Bulletin* on 6 October 1920 about his dealings with Roy whom he knew as 'Mr. Martin'.

8. Starr-Hunt became a government witness at the San Francisco trial. His testimony enabled the government to unravel much of the mystery of the *Maverick* (*San Francisco Examiner,* January 31, 1918).

M. N. Roy wrote in his *Memoirs*: "Evidently the clandestine activities of the German propagandists and Indian revolutionaries associated with them were not unknown to the American Secret Service. Indeed, American Secret Service agents were in the 'conspiracy'. I have reason to belive that Starr-Hunt was one of them". (pp. 25-26).

9. Roy *Memoirs,* p. 35.

10. My interview with Pandit Laxman Sastri Joshi, a later associate of M. N. Roy in India, and editor of Marathi Encyclopaedia.

11. Roy *Memoirs,* p. 5.

12. Ibid, p. 58.

13. Ibid, p. 20.

14. Jadugopal Mukherjee, *Biplabi Jibaner Smriti* (Memoirs of Revolutionary Life); Calcutta, 1956; p. 635.

15. Evelyn Trent was introduced to M. N. Roy by Mrs. Dhangopal Mukherjee, who was a niece of the Irish nationalist leader, De Valera, and a 'radical' herself. She refused to reside in a sorority of the University because "Blacks, Jews and Quakers were not allowed there".

16. Based on (a) Joseph G. Rayback—*A History of American Labor;* A Free Press Paperback, 1966; pp. 230-281; (b) *Writings and Speeches of Eugene Debs*: Introduction by Arthur M. Schlesigger Jr; Hermitage Press, N. Y., 1948; pp. ix-xi; and (c) my interview with Late Prof. Stanley Plastrik of New York University, formerly one of the editors of "*Dissent*".

17. Roy *Memoirs,* p. 28.

18. Emily Brown, Op. cit.

19. U. S. Military Intelligence File; P. F.-5525; April 27, 1918. See also: K. K. Banerjee, Op. Cit., p. 34; and Samaren Roy's article "M. N. Roy in America" in *The Radical Humanist,* March 1983.

20. Lala Lajpat Rai's Diary, 1914-17, preserved in the National Archives; pp. 40-41.

21. N. Y. Times report quoted in K. K. Banerjee, Op. Cit., p. 42.

22. Agnes Smedley, *Daughter of Earth;* The Feminist Press, New York, 1973; pp. 257-58 and p. 274.

23. Roy *Memoirs,* p. 64.

24. Ibid, p. 29.

A report by Fred J. Weyand from Boston dated April 15, 1918 after his interrogation of Prof. Pope in connection with the Hindu-German Conspiracy case states: "He (Pope) also had a copy of a manuscript mailed to him in mailing wrapper of B. W. Huebsch, Publishers, 225 Fifth Avenue, New York City......who retained another copy......Prof. Pope also stated that it was Prof. Jordan of Stanford University......who read the book, corrected the errors and also furnished the title to it".

U. S. Military Intelligence file; P. F.-5525-M.I.-3e.

25. Roy *Memoirs,* p. 29.

26. Ibid, pp. 90-92.

27. Chunder Chakravarty, *New India,* Calcutta, 1951; p. 34.

28. Roy *Memoirs,* p. 86.

29. Ibid, p. 57.

30. Ibid, p. 111.

31. Ibid, p. 165.

32. Prof. Richard L. Park, a later friend of M. N. Roy, wrote to me on January 9, 1974, "Roy did not like most Americans, though he married two of them".

33. Roy *Memoirs,* p. 195.

34. Ibid, p. 217.

IV. The Mexican Interlude

M. N. ROY CHOSE TO GO TO MEXICO MAINLY BECAUSE HE WANTED to escape the long arm of the British and American police. "I had to get out of the United States not willing to spend time in an American prison and thereafter be deported to India where a much heavier sentence awaited my return".[1]

Roy arrived in Mexico with only the letter of introduction given by Dr. David Starr Jordan of Stanford University to General Alvarado, who was then Governor of the far-off state of Yucatan, a place practically inaccessible from the rest of Mexico. But he abandoned the idea of visiting Yucatan and seeing for himself Alvarado's socialist experiment. He was more keen to make contact with the Mexican Government. With the ostensible purpose of presenting his letter of introduction to General Alvarado, Roy succeeded in getting an interveiw with the Minister of Defence, who happened to be the son-in-law of President Carranza. He was relieved when the Defence Minister assured him that he was safe in Mexico and that he was "amongst friends". The very next day, Roy received an invitation from the editor of *El Pueblo* (The People), the official daily of the Government. He requested Roy to contribute a series of articles about British rule in India.

One of the first things Roy did after reaching Mexico was to take lessons in Spanish and translate into Spanish the book, *The Way to Durable Peace*, that he wrote while in New York. In Mexico he added to it a longish chapter on the origin of the Monroe Doctrine and its development in practice during nearly one hundred years.[2] In that chapter Roy argued in defence of

Mexico's necessity to put an end to North American tutelage. With that purpose, Roy said, a Latin American League should be formed as an opposition to the Pan-American conference sponsored by the U.S.A. The idea appealed to President Carranza.[3]

In Mexico the Germans also renewed their contact with him. The day Roy called on the editor of *El Pueblo,* a German came to see him and gave him the message that the two Germans, whom he had met in Java, were in Mexico and were eager to meet him.

Roy met and recognized the two Germans : one was an army officer who was sent to Java to arrange for transport of arms to India, and the other, a high official in the Colonial service. Roy was also introduced to the host, Commander von Koenig of the *Deutschland.* Soon after U.S.A. joined the war, the famous German submarine was seized in an American port ; von Koenig, who was not on board at the time, managed to escape to Mexico. From them Roy came to know that the Germans were never informed in New York about Roy's intention to go to Germany.[4] Roy was again offered financial assistance to buy arms from China which Roy had arranged through Sun Yat-sen, and he did feel attracted to the offer.

According to a U.S. Military Intelligence report "Charles A. Martin, alias Mahendra Nath Roy (U.S. Intelligence reports often referred to M. N. Roy as Mahendra Nath Roy), is one of the chief Indians who are trying to provoke, with German help, a rebellion in India......His wife's name is Evelyn... who states that she was born in California, and that her family had cast her off for marrying an Indian......It is understood that Roy was wanted in San Francisco (in connection with the Hindu-German conspiracy case). They stayed a few days at Nuevo Laredo, and reached Mexico city on June 15, 1917. On September 5, they were living at Calle Corboda 33, and Dhirendra Nath Sen came to live with them".[5]

Roy was then invited to a banquet at the German Legation where he was introduced to President Carranza. Carranza told

Roy at this very first meeting that he had been duly informed about Roy's mission to purchase arms in China and offered all necessary facilities for the journey. Carranza also assured Roy that in case he returned to Mexico, the Mexican Government would support his plan for a Latin American Union.

Elaborate preparations were made for Roy's journey to China. Roy was provided with a semi-diplomatic Mexican passport and a letter of introduction to the Mexican Consul General in Yokohoma who would help him make the financial transactions through a Japanese bank.

Roy decided to avoid travelling through the U.S.A. where a police officer from British India, G. C. Denham was assisting the prosecution in conducting the Hindu-German Conspiracy case,[6] and had made elaborate plans to kidnap Roy. Roy therefore decided to take a Japanese ship from some Mexican port that would avoid San Francisco which most ships touched. The most difficult part was to reach the Mexican port on the Pacific because there was no regular train service and the last portion passed through a mountaneous country infested with bandits.

Armed with mauser pistols and provided with one bogey full of soldiers, Roy made the last lap in a two-bogey military convoy and reached the practically deserted port Manzanillo, where he learnt that ocean-going ships called at another port, Salina Cruz, 300 miles to the south. He went to Salina Cruz and after waiting there for several days, learned that the next ship would not reach the port for at least another month.

At that point, Roy writes, "It suddenly dawned on me that I really did not want to go again on the wild-goose chase. Mexico called me back ; there I had made new friends, found new interests and planned to begin a new political career..... the way back to old adventures was practically closed".[7]

In the early twentieth century there were no political parties in Mexico. Various groups, struggling for power, centred round individuals, mostly military men. Madero, the leader of 1911 revolution was the only civilian President for a short time. The groups contending for power were named after their leaders. The active following in each case was composed of military men or leaders of armed insurgent groups. Since the revolution of 1911, Carranza was the only President who held power for a sufficiently long time, and in 1916 he convened a Constituent Assembly and framed a constitution for the country. Thereafter, a parliament was constituted which met regularly.

Left wing politics was also amorphous and disorganized. There was however a small Socialist Party. Its leader was an elderly lawyer, Ignazio Santibanez, whose home was the party office. Roy met him soon after his return. Santibanez welcomed him and recalled his articles on India published serially in *El Pueblo*. The Socialist Party Chairman was pleased with the articles because they depicted India realistically and not as a dreamland.[8]

A few days later he received an invitation to attend a meeting of the Executive Committee of the Socialist Party, where he was introduced to the nine members of the committee, all proletarian, except Santibanez, and another who was a school teacher.

At this time, a large number of Americans--pacifists, anarcho-syndicalists and socialists of various shades had escaped to Mexico to evade compulsory military service, introduced soon after America joined the war. Left wing journalism, art and literature of America were fairly represented in the ranks of these refugees. Among them were Maurice Baker, poet and cartoonist; Irwin Greenwich, novelist (who subsequently came to be known as Mike Gold); Henry Glintenkamp, painter and cartoonist; and Carleton Beals, journalist (who later became famous as author of books on Mexico and Spain). The first three had been regular contributors to the radical art and literary journal, *The Masses,* edited by Max Eastman. They all belonged to the Greenwich Village group, the bohemia of New York. Another, whom Roy first met at the socialist leader's place, was Charlie Philips who came to be known as Manuel Gomez and was later, along with Roy, a delegate to the Second Congress of the Communist International from Mexico.

Charlie brought the news that General Alvarado was planning to start a daily paper and was looking for an editor for its English section to enlist the support of the American colony in Mexico in his bid to become the next President of Mexico.[9] Alvarado's main opponent was General Obregon who had pronounced sympathy for the Allies and America, and who in 1920 actually headed an armed insurrection that overthrew Carranza. Alvarado, with Carranza's patronage, wanted to publish his newspaper to fight Obregon by denouncing militarism and pleading for a return to civil administration. Charlie became the editor of the English section of the daily named, *El Heraldo de Mexico*. Roy later published his series of articles on the Monroe Doctrine in this paper.

About this time Roy met Don Manuel, the socialist President of Chamber of Deputies, at the residence of the editor of *La Mujer Moderna*.[10] They took this opportunity to discuss the future of the Socialist Party of Mexico. Roy, at this meeting, suggested to Don Manuel the building up of the working class organization and submitted an outline of a labour policy to the President for his consideration.[11]

The Executive Committee of the Socialist Party appointed Roy as the editor of its party organ, *La Lucha,* and director of party propaganda in preparation for a conference of Socialists from Mexico and other Latin American countries. Roy was also authorized to invite fraternal delegates from these countries,[12] and the American radical community announced their eageness to send fraternal delegates from U.S.A. The President of the Chamber of Deputies informed Roy that President Carranza "had been closely following my activities to reorganise the Socialist Party, and was keenly interested in the result, particularly in the matter of fraternal delegates from the central and south American countries attending the conference", and confided that "I could count upon the cooperation of Mexican diplomats and Consular representatives in that respect".[13]

At the conference "several hundred delegates" from different States of the Mexican Republic and a number of socialist leaders from central and south American countries participated.[14] A demonstration led by Charlie Philips and Irwin Greenwich holding aloft a huge picture of Lenin (which was sent by John Reed) was one of the highlights of the conference. The demonstration marched to the *Palacio Nacional,* the seat of the government, where Charlie Philips addressed the gathering and demanded that President Carranza consolidate the revolutionary anti-imperialist front to protect the interests of the working class. Carranza appeared on the balcony, as arranged, to greet the people and declare that "the voice of the people being the voice of God, he would obey it".[15]

The conference elected a new Executive Committee with Roy as the General Secretary. A new constitution of the party, which came to be known as the Socialist Party of Mexico, was adopted. It resolved to set up a committee to convene a regional international conference with the object of forming the Latin American League. Roy was also elected Secretary of this convening committee. Besides Charlie Philips, another delegate who "stood head and shoulder above other delegates" was Plutarco Elias Calles[16] from Sonora.

Sonora had a common land frontier with the United States, and the geographical situation was favourable for the building up of anti-Carranzista force with American aid Therefore, with Calles, President Carranza would see the prospect of removing his rival from that strategic position. Calles told Roy that as the "secret adviser of the President (Carranza)" he should take up the suggestion with Carranza. Carranza agreed that a popular campaign for the election of state governors should be encouraged and added that Sonora was certainly ready for the establishment of a constitutional regime. The Federal Government, Carranza said, would order the election in Sonora and direct General Obregon to guarantee the fullest freedom for a constitutional election campaign.

The Socialist Party then announced its decision to contest the election for Sonora's governorship and sent its General Secretary to launch the election campaign. Roy travelled to Sonora overland in a military convoy. The Federal Government had advised him, for his personal safety, not to travel the shorter and better route which passed through United States.

In the capital of Sonora, Harmoshila, "a glorified village"—in Roy's words—a public meeting was held to announce the establishment of a branch of the Socialist Party and that its leader, Calles, was a candidate for the election of the governor of the state.

While the campaign against him was being organized, General Obregon resigned from the governorship, and advised Carranza to appoint Calles as his successor as the Governor of Sonora. The Socialist Party celebrated its first great victory. In recognition of his patriotic services within a short period of his governorship, Calles was shortly thereafter invited to join the Federal Government as Minister of Labour.

Roy writes in his *Memoirs* that months before Calles appeared on the scene, the way to his (Roy's) rise to power had been prepared by Don Manuel in pursuading President Carranza to patronize "my" political experiment. In the first formal meeting Carranza had expressed his desire to appoint a Labour Minister and had asked Roy if a suitable candidate could be found among the socialists. "That evidently was a gesture meant to grant an official recognition to the nascent Socialist Party" and raise its status in the public life of the country.

Roy thus not only established himself as the leader of the Socialist Party of Mexico but also as an important figure in Mexican politics ; and in the process endeared himself to President Carranza. Roy later recalled : "My association with Carranza was an interesting experience.....During the latter days of my sojourn in Mexico, we met frequently".[17]

Visit of Borodin

Early in the summer of 1919, Borodin called at the office of the *El Heraldo de Mexico* to enquire how he could meet the "Hindu" General Secretary of the Socialist Party. Before leaving, the Bolshevik visitor, who announced himself as "Mr.

Brantwein", said, "Please don't worry, I am a friend—coming from Russia. Deliver the message to Roy. I shall call again tomorrow".[18] Roy was excited to be able to meet a Russian Bolshevik and get some first-hand information about the revolution there.

Borodin had come to Mexico penniless. Stranded there, he was looking for friend and support. After the defeat of the Russian revolution in 1905, Borodin had gone to America and lived there as "Mr. Gruzenberg". His wife and family still lived there. He returned to Russia in 1918 and was sent back to America to assist the Russian trade delegation when he carried a good quantity of Czarist jewels.[19] Immediately on arrival in New York, Borodin was spotted by the U.S. Secret Service, and he did not feel safe to stay on there. Mexico was the only escape. Neither he nor his friends knew anybody in Mexico. One of his friends, a leading Socialist told him that many young American Radicals had escaped to Mexico ; he would come to know them once he was there but warned against one man by the name of Gale.[20]

Immediately after his arrival, Borodin went in search of newspapers and purchased a few copies of *Gale's Magazine*. Going through them he found at least one article in every issue attacking M. N. Roy, described as the General Secretary of the Socialist Party of Mexico, and so he went to the office of the *El Heraldo* to find out M. N. Roy.

Roy invited him (Borodin) to his house when the latter confided to Roy the story of the missing jewels and confessed that he was virtually stranded in Mexico. Borodin told Roy that he was expecting to hear from his wife about the jewels as he had left her with no money a year ago when he returned to Russia. Besides, the trade delegation also was stranded. Roy sent Mrs. Borodin five hundred dollars and the trade delegation five thousand as the first instalment through the Mexican diplomatic mission. Borodin also accepted Roy's invitation to be his guest and thus began a long friendship.[21]

With Borodin as his guest, Roy began to discuss the theory and practice of communism. These discussions began after dinner, and often continued until early in the morning. Roy wrote later : "It was the most memorable period of my life when the foundation of my subsequent intellectual development was laid. He (Borodin) initiated me in the intricacies of Hegelian dialectics as the key to Marxism. My lingering faith in the special genius of India faded as I learned from him the history of European culture".[22]

The news of Borodin's arrival in Mexico was kept out of the press, but members of the Socialist Party came to know and decided to convene a general meeting to meet the first Bolshevik emissary. Borodin was first introduced to the party executive at a closed meeting, where Roy explained the object of his visit as "exploratory" and to inform the Mexican socialists of the foundation of the Third (Communist) International. It was decided to convene a special conference of the Socialist Party and associated organizations to found the first Communist Party outside Russia. This conference, held August 27 to September 4, 1919, decided to rename the Socialist Party as the Communist Party of Mexico.[23] Both M. N. Roy and his wife Evelyn sat on the presidium of this conference. Lenin sent a special message to the conference which was read out by Borodin ; and after the conference Lenin sent a special invitation to Roy and the Mexican Communist Party to send a delegation to the Second Congress of the Communist International.

Borodin was then presented to President Carranza at a special banquet where other guests included Don Manuel, the President of the Chamber of Deputies ; Maestro Cassas, the Rector of the University, and the Foreign Minister. Borodin announced at the banquet that "the new regime in Russia fully sympathised with the struggle of the Latin American people against imperialism and was eager to help it in every possible way. With that purpose a Latin American Bureau of the Communist International should be established in Mexico" if the President consented. Carranza requested Borodin to convey his good wishes to the head of the new regime in Russia thus according *de facto* recognition to the new Communist regime in Russia.

Following President's approval, the Mexican foreign ministry accorded to Borodin the facility to contact the West European Bureau of the Communist International through the Mexican Legation in Holland. As Russia still had no postal connection with the rest of the world, this helped Borodin contact Moscow, when he conveyed to the leaders in Moscow that with Roy's help efforts were being made to retrieve the lost jewels and that in the meantime the most urgent requirements had been met.

Before Roy left for Moscow in December 1919, he met Carranza to say good-bye. Carranza made special arrangements for Roy and Evelyn to travel with Mexican diplomatic passports as his special emissaries.[24] Carranza asked Roy to see the Mexican Ambassador in Berlin, a man in whom he could confide, for resumption of diplomatic relations with Soviet Union. Before parting, "the old man (Carranza) put his hand on my shoulder, and in a voice choked with suppressed emotion, said: 'You are still very young. Don't gamble with fate';.....(then) turned on his heels abruptly and walked away".[25]

> Roy later wrote in his *Memoirs* :
> "My ideas of revolution and political activity changed during my stay in the United States of America. But the sojourn there was too short for me to put the new ideas into practice. In Mexico I got the chance. For the first time I came in contact with a mass revolutionary movement".[26]

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. M. N. Roy, *Memoirs*, Allied Publishers, New Delhi, 1964; p. 58
2. Ibid, pp. 123-24; Throughout his stay in Mexico, British Intel-

ligence kept U.S. Military Intelligence informed about Roy's movements and intercepted Roy's letters to friends in America. Among these were two letters Roy wrote to Prof. Arthur Upham Pope: one on January 19, 1918 and signed 'Manuel Mendez' and the other on February 9, 1918 and signed 'A Crosby'. In his Jan 19 letter, Roy wrote to Pope: "Enclosed herewith is the revised manuscript (The Way to Durable Peace)......If the old Mss is already in press, don't bother for change ......As the Mss is greatly changed, we cannot use the introduction written by Dr. Jordan without letting him read the new one". (U.S. Military Intelligence File No. P.F.—5525--M.I.—3e)

3. Roy, *Memoirs,* p. 125

4. Ibid, p. 67

5. Letter of the Military Attache at the U.S. Embassy in Mexico, No. 268 dated March 4, 1918 in reply to the Chief of Military Intelligence Branch, Executive Division, Washington, D.C.

6. Roy, *Memoirs,* p. 64; Carleton Beals wrote in *Glass Houses* (published by J. B. Lippincot Company, London and Toronto; 1938) that "Roy (was) constantly shadowed by English secret service agents" (p. 52).

7. Roy, *Memoirs,* p. 103

8. Ibid, p. 75

9. Ibid, p. 111

10. Ibid, p. 118: Even though Roy met her "frequently", he does not mention her name. In his *Memoirs,* he only says that this "......young lady was editor of a monthly magazine—*La Mujer Moderna* (The Modern Woman), the first and only of its kind in Mexico....... She had been private Secretary of Carranza before he became the President of the Republic. In recognition of her services, the latter raised her to a public position" (pp. 69-70).

It is possible that 'La Mujer Moderna' was Elena Torres, who was also President of the Women's Club in Mexico.

According to U.S. Military Intelligence, Evelyn Roy wrote her a letter from Petrograd in July 1920.

The report says: "Elena Torres received a letter from Evelyn Roy from Petrograd in which the Russian situation is drawn with enthusiastic colors. In this letter she says that Roy is writing to me but up to date I have received nothing and I tried to get Elena to give me the letter so that I may copy and send it in. The letter (to Elena) came by way of Esthonia" (Number 1777, Mexico city, Aug 8, 1920; 10058-0-3, p. 56: M. I. File No. 9771-B-41).

11. Roy, *Memoirs,* p. 119

12. Ibid, p. 140

13. Ibid, p. 140

14. Ibid, p. 141

15. Ibid, p. 144

16. Ibid, p. 147; At the time Plutarco Elias Calles was a village school teacher in the northern state of Sonora. In 1925 Calles, as President of Mexico, visited Paris and met Roy and told him that he still possessed the membership card of the Mexican Socialist Party signed by Roy as General Secretary.

17. Ibid, p. 163

18. Ibid, p. 178

19. The story of the Czarist jewels have been carried in many books as well as by Roy in his *Memoirs* (pp. 196—203)

20. Ibid, p. 187; A new York datelined report in the English language page of *El Heraldo de Mexico* (21 June 1919) under caption: "N. Y. Bolsheviks Refused Aid of L. A. Gale" states:

"Among the papers taken in the raid on the office of L. K. Martens, the agent of the Bolshevik government of Russia here, was a letter from Linn A. Gale, of this city, in which the latter is said to have asked for funds with which to make Bolshevik propaganda in Mexico.

"The request was evidently turned down, for a marginal note on the letter read as follows: 'Not to be granted. The man is only an adventurer'."

21. Roy, *Memoirs,* p. 191

22. Ibid, p. 195

23. On the formation of the Mexican Communist Party, Karl M. Schmitt of the University of Texas at Austin writes:

"The orthodox Mexican Communist Party (Partido Communista Mexicana—PCM) founded in 1919, was among the first to be organized in Latin America following the successful Bolshevik Revolution......in the summer of 1919. As the various leftist groups talked of forming a new Socialist Party, Roy began to finance a small paper, *El Socialista,* run by Francisco Cervantes Lopez, leader of the Red Marxist Group (Groupo Marxista Rojo).........By the late summer of 1919 all the persons and elements were present in Mexico for the founding of a Communist Party.........Under these circumstances the Mexican socialists held a Congress in Mexico city from August 25 to September 4, 1919, financed and greatly influenced by Roy. Almost immediately upon opening, a dispute arose over the seating of Louis Morones, to whom Gale objected.........Roy, as Chairman, broke a tie vote and Morone was seated ....Roy then gathered the extreme left socialists around himself and with Borodin's blessings formed the Mexican Communist Party". (Karl M. Schmitt, Communism in Mexico; University of Texas Press, 1965; pp. 3--6).

24. Shortly after Roy left Mexico, a letter from the U. S. Military Attache in Mexico (No. M.I. 4-F/10541-938 dated February 19, 1920)

to Mr. W. L. Hurley, Office of the Under-Secretary, Department of State, Washington, D.C. said: "This office received information to the effect that Roy—Mahendra Nath, (alias Narendra Bhattacharya, alias Mana Ben Roy, alias Charles Martin, alias Manuel Mendez) who was one of the Indian Revolutionary Party of Bengal, has recently left Vera Cruz, Mexico. Shortly before his departure he had certain credentials signed, leaving the name blank, but explained this action by stating that the same were required for a Comrade in Spain".

25. Roy, *Memoirs*, p. 218

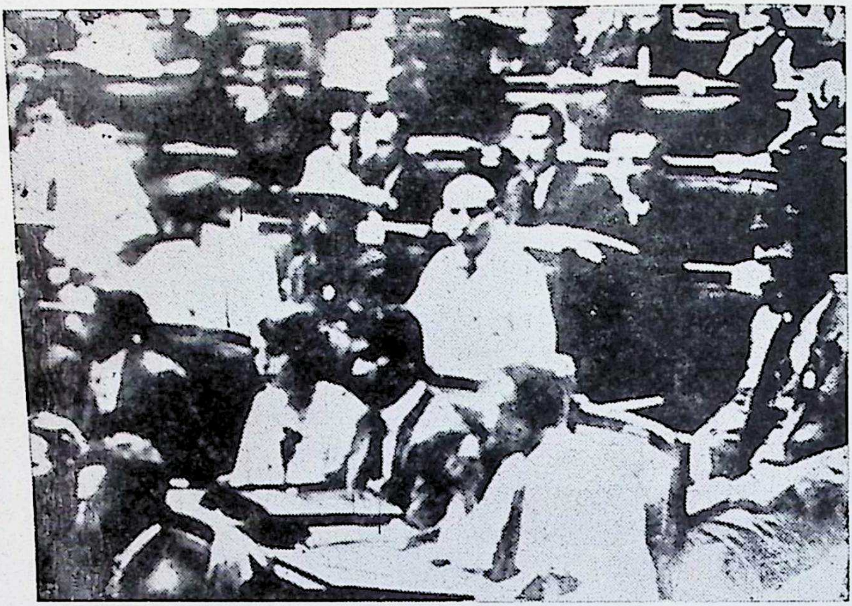
26. Ibid, p. 350

The picture on the facing page is extracted and enlarged from a picture at a mass gathering in Petrograd in honour of the Bolshevik revolutionaries.

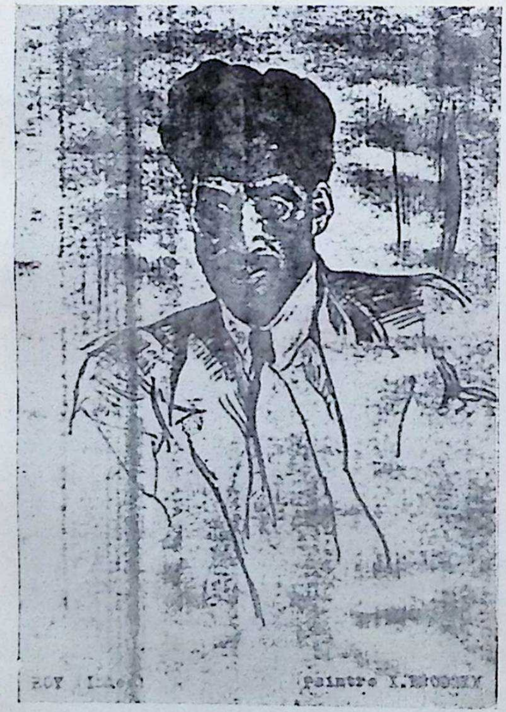
The Assistant Military Attache at the American Embassy in Mexico city, Mexico, transmitting this picture to the Director of Military Intelligence in Washington, D.C. wrote in his letter No. 1877 of September 27, 1920:

"Reference your No. 9971-B-41, M.I. 10, August 27, 1920, Elena Torres received a letter from Nath Roy's wife, Evelyn Roy, enclosing a small kodak picture in which Nath Roy and herself are shown as participating in a ceremony given in Petrograd to honor the Bolsheviki heroic dead. I got poeession of this picture for a day and had the enclosed enlargements made. Roy and his wife are marked (X)."

(Zinoviev)
[illegible] 62



M. N. Roy and Evelyn Roy among delegates at the Second Congrees of the Comintern (Courtesy : Chinmohan Sehanobis)



This Sketch of M. N. Roy by painter I. Brodsky appeared in a Souvenir published during the Second Congress of the Comintern

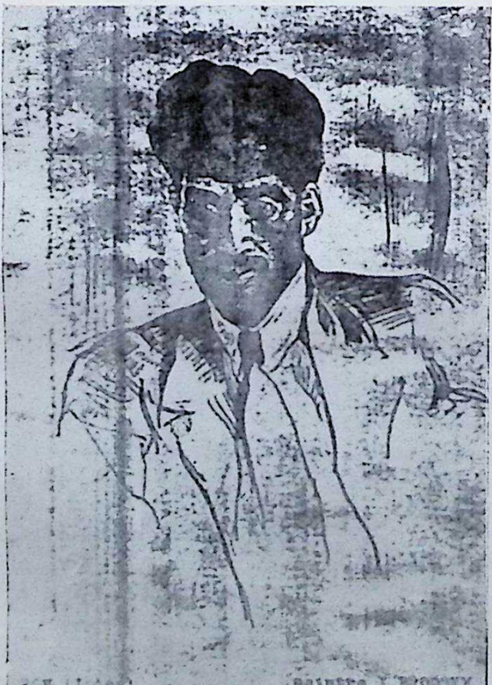
V. Development of Socialist Thought

DURING HIS TWO AND A HALF YEARS' STAY IN MEXICO, M. N. ROY had time and opportunity to study socialism and participate in the activities of the Mexican Socialist Party of which he became the General Secretary in 1918.[1] Thus an understanding of Roy's development into a Marxist thinker must take note of the development of Marxist and socialist thought in the context of non-industrialised societies—in Mexico where he was then located and India where he wanted to return eventually and participate in its politics.

As early as 1853 Marx, in an article on revolution in China and Europe, expressed two ideas: 1) that the spread of capitalism was in the process of creating a single economic system, and 2) that convulsions in China (the Taiping rebellion was happening then) could react on Europe and provoke a revolution.[2] The second point made out by Marx could be thought of as a corollary to the first—that the evolution of a global economic system may shape differently or be hastened if revolution in Asia made capitalism less profitable in Europe.

In 1875 Engels envisaged the possibility of transforming the Russian village community into a higher form of socialist property provided socialist revolution took place in Western Europe before the complete disintegration of communal property in Russia. Two years later, Marx lamented that by going capita-

M. N. Roy and Evelyn Roy among delegates at the Second Congrees of the Comintern (Courtesy : Chinmohan Sehanobis)


ROY (Inde)
Peintre I. BRODSKY

This Sketch of M. N. Roy by painter
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In 1875 Engels envisaged the possibility of transforming the Russian village community into a higher form of socialist property provided socialist revolution took place in Western Europe before the complete disintegration of communal property in Russia. Two years later, Marx lamented that by going capitalist (since 1861) Russia was losing an opportunity to bypass capitalism and reach a higher form of development based on its existing village communities.

In 1882 Marx and Engels went further and expressed the hope that the socialization of industry in the West and transformation of communal land ownership in Russia could compliment each other, and become the basis for a communist development.[3]

In 1894 Engels thought that all countries brought into the dominant orbit of capitalism but still retaining communal forms of property could avoid the pains of evolution through the phase of capitalism. But once again he thought the initative for such a change—in fact a skipping over of the capitalist phase—had to come from the industrial proletariat in the West. This was a logical development of the views of Marx and Engels that communism was a historical development in succession to capitalism, but once capitalism was overthrown by the proletariat in industrialized societies, the organization of society in non-industrialized countries could be so arranged as to skip over the capitalist phase.

Both of them thought that the initiative rested with the industrial proletariat; but in 1875 Engels did fleetingly entertain the possibility of a revolution in Russia being started by the 'upper classes in the capital' and being subsequently carried further by the peasants.[4]

There was also a tendency to emphasize the fact that a proletarian revolution could only take place as the result of the loss of a dependency. In 1869 Marx wrote to Engels that the English working class would never accomplish anything until the British political system was shaken by the loss of Ireland.[5]

The mention of Russia and Ireland did not exclude possibilities in China and India—only the other two were nearer and topically relevant because things were happening there. But Marx was close enough in time to the utilitarian phase in British politics which between 1820 and 1852 had tried to modernize India, and he had welcomed it.[6]

But while Marx and Engels thought of humanity as a whole their immediate tasks related to the achievement of a proletarian revolution in Europe, where industrial revolution had created a large proletariat. Marx, however, did think that the proletariat in Europe would be helped if capitalist profits from the colonies were cut off.

At the end of 1848, having described England as "the rock on which the waves of revolution break". Marx concluded that "old England will be destroyed only by a world war". The prophecy did not come true for England till the 20th century except in a minor way after the conclusion of the first world war, and to a greater extent after the conclusion of the second. The social changes brought about by these two world wars did not amount to a revolution in England. England came out mauled but still victorious in each of the two world wars, and was able to retain her political and economic structure.

Marxism however was affected more by wars than revolutions. On the other hand, the socialist tradition always embodied a strong element of opposition to war, based on the specific interest of the workers in the maintenance of peace. Yet war alone provided opportunities for revolution. The two sentiments combined resulted in the advocacy of national defeatism.

Looking backwards one can argue that revolutions were dependent upon defeat in a war. France's defeat in 1870 enabled the short-lived Paris Commune to foreshadow events in Russia after its defeat in the Russo-Japanese war of 1904-5, and more effectively after reverses in World War I. The revolution of 1905-7 failed, but it initiated a policy of national defeatism advocated only by the Russians, both Bolshevik and Menshevik. Lenin rejoiced at Russian defeats.

The other members of the Second International had different attitudes. There were a large number of Pactifists (mainly British), who just abhorred war on humanitarian grounds. There were also advocates of the Bakuninist idea of a 'general strike against war' (predominantly French). Others desired only peaceful agitations to prevent outbreak of war. But a large number (mainly Germans) desired to safeguard in one form or another the workers' right to participate in the defence of their country if it was attacked. The Germans and the Italians constituted the largest groups in the Second International.

In the two decades before the outbreak of the first world war there were several colonial wars fought by the British, the French, the Germans and the Italians, and in a way, through war with Spain, by the Americans. The Second International was not troubled by them; they were minor wars and far off in the colonies. On the contrary, since 1870 the working class in the imperialist countries was getting more affluent, and came to believe that its prosperity was related to the country's possession of colonies.

The long period of peace in Europe which followed the Franco-Prussian war damped revolutionary fervour. Eduard Bernstein in 1899 made his revision of Marxism in which revolutions and the revolutionary role of the proletariat were both relegated to unimportance.[7]

The colonial wars however provoked different kinds of reaction. The problem of the colonies was put on the agenda of 1900 Paris Congress of the Second International. Four years later, at the Amsterdam Congress contradictory tendencies manifested themselves openly. At the Stuttgart Congress (1907) these tendencies clashed in a lengthy and impassioned debate.

Earlier on humanitarian grounds as well as on the assumption that the colonies served only the purpose of enriching the bourgeoisie, the European socialists had disapproved of colonies as well as colonial wars. But in 1902, the British social-liberal, Hobson wrote his celebrated work, *Imperialism* in which he tried to combat the prevalent idea that profits from the colonies filtered down to the workers. It was an anti-imperialist and socialist thesis but was not convincing to the working class whose standards of living were continually improving.

In 1904, and more explicitly in 1907 at Stuttgart, some socialists demanded a "positive" colonial policy by the Second International which would mark itself as different from the earlier policy of disapproval of colonial expansion and wars, which was dubbed as "negative". The main exponent of the idea was the Dutch socialist, Van Kol, who held that "the possession of colonies (will be) necessary, even under the future socialist system of government". He thought the exploitation of the resources of "half the globe" could not be left to the caprice of people still in their infancy, and that "we" (Europeans) shall have to intervene in the interest of all humanity so that the earth which is the property of the human race may furnish all its inhabitants with a means of existence.

From that he proceeded to the socialist "duty not to hinder the development of Capitalism" and looked forward through such development to a period when colonial people "will no longer need our tutelage". Since that was in the distant future "for a long time to come we shall have to protect ourselves against backward forms of production, and from now on the *workers of the countries will have to secure themselves against the deadly competition of colonial labour*".[8] (Emphasis added).

But the Englishman Hyndman held: "Socialism itself is less important for Western Europe than the prevention of this large-scale atrocity" (colonial domination and exploitation). But by his emphasis Hyndman had put himself outside the pale of socialism into the broader field of humanitarianism.

Three years later, Dr. Eduard David, a German, asked for a vote on a resolution stating that the Socialist Congress accepts the principle of colonization—"We must get out of the realm of words. Europe needs colonies. It does not even have enought of them. Without colonies, we should be comparable, from an economic standpoint, to China". Terwagne (Belgium) asked for the addition of a sentence that "The Congress does not condemn in principle and for all time, every colonial policy; under a Socialist regime, colonization can be a work of civilization".

Rouanet (France) supported Terwagne and declared that colonization was not a purely capitalistic phenomenon but historical. Even bourgeois colonization was desirable for bettering the economic existence of European and American countries. Eduard Bernstein (Germany) asked for the rejection of the utopian idea, the result of which would be abandonment of colonies. He also said : "A great part of our economy is based on the acquisition of colonial products, products which the natives hardly put to use".

The debate did not proceed on national lines, but on those of Europe versus the Colonies. G. Van Kol, when he spoke in support of David and Terwagne. was cheered from the Dutch benches and also by a few English delegates.

A minority tried through amendments to change the resolution into one of condemnation of colonialism, and considered civilizing missions of capitalist societies a pretext for exploitation. Ledebour, Wurm, Bracke and Karski—all from Germany—and a French delegate, Delaporte, were its sponsors. Georg Ledebour, opposing the motion, said that socialists must combat exploitation and oppression in the colonies.

Karski, a Pole, cited his country's experience of Russian rule. He disagreed with David that colonies would revert to barbarism if freed. He thought in India, European culture would continue even if it was not imposed by bayonets. Kautsky (Germany), a Marxist theoretician equal in stature to Bernstein, held that the people in the colonies rejected modern civilization because of the domination it was accompanied with. "If we want to exercise a civilizing influence it is imperative we gain their confidence and we shall gain this confidence only when we give them freedom". Kautsky felt obliged to request the Congress to come out openly *against the majority* of the German delegation.

David taunted : "Let our English comrades, supporters of the Ledebour resolution, let our French comrades who support it as well, propose in their respective parliaments the relinquishment of the colonies". Van Kol, summing up, criticised Kautsky and said : "If we Europeans went to Africa with our European machines, we would be the victim of our expedition. We must, on the contrary, have arms in our hands in order to defend ourselves, even if Kautsky calls this imperialism".[9]

These lengthy quotations go only to show that majority of European Social Democrats had by 1907 turned "chauvinists" as far as colonies were concerned, but maintained the International brotherhood among Europeans. The attitude was similar to the European bourgoisie who were close to each other as against the proletariat.

The Commission's proposals were defeated in the Stuttgart Congress by 128 votes to 108 with 10 abstentions, all Swiss. The total votes polled by the small countries which did not pursue a colonial policy exceeded the votes of states "where the proletariat has to some extent been infected with the passion for conquest" Lenin, who wrote on the Stuttgart Congress soon after, thought the Commission on the colonial question had been so constituted that it could reverse the earlier socialist policy. He identified the minority opposing the "positive" policy consisted of Ledebour from Germany, the Polish and Russian Social Democrats.

Lenin did not foresee that the Stuttgart debate on colonies held in it the seeds of social patriotism which flowered on the outbreak of the first world war. As Lenin described it, it was an imperialist war, and colonialism was what imperialism was based on.

In 1904, while the Russo-Japanese war was on, Katayama, a Japanese Social Democrat, attended the Congress of the Second International at Amsterdam; and his public handshake with Plekhanov was one of the highlights of the Congress. Till then chauvinism had not overtaken the social democrats. On the other hand they took every opportunity of displaying international solidarity.

Earlier, in this book, I have analysed the background against which Roy's personality and thought developed I have also dealt briefly with the Bengali and terrorist influences, the cultural and political condition of Mexico, and the cultural situation in Europe. Similarly, a detailed study of the socialist thought to which he became a convert, hesitantly at first and then enthusiastically, has to be examined.

When the American Radicals in New York queried him and Lajput Rai about the guarantee that in a liberated India the workers and peasants would not be exploited, neither of them had an answer. There is little evidence of the question having made a deep impression on Lajpat Rai, but on M. N. Roy's own testimony the question was a turning point in his thought and career.

The American Radicals' question arose out of the background of socialist thinking at that time. Did it reflect the tendency which had been growing among Socialists since 1900 that Europeans and Americans had civilizing missions in colonial countries? that even bourgeois exploitation of those countries was in the interests of the natives themselves? In short, was it a historical rather than a capitalist phenomenon, and in certain situations could justify the use of arms?

We are not able to answer these questions till we can trace the precise political affiliations of those Radicals—to the school of socialist thought they belonged to. Till then the different views expressed at the Amsterdam and Stuttgart Socialist Congresses have a relevance for understanding Roy. All shades of socialist opinion were expressed at those two Congresses, and the voting at Stuttgart reveals how nearly matched were those opposing national liberation of the colonies and those advocating a withdrawal of imperialist powers from colonies.

The muster of 108 votes in favour of condemning colonial exploitation at Stuttgart should be treated as an awakening of human sympathies. The Stuttgart vote was the latest on the colonial issue when Roy was drawn to Marxism. His personal involvement in the issue was great and we can be assured that Roy must have explored socialist opinion on colonies before he developed his own heresy.

Stuttgart was also a pointer to a change that had overtaken both Socialism and Marxism. There were some geographical shifts too which should be borne in mind. During the life times of Marx and Engels, London as their residence was the centre of socialist thought. But little was happening in Britain. The main events were occurring on the Continent, and all the democratic movements looked to Paris for inspiration —to Produdhon's declamation of property as theft and to Blanqui for guidance in insurrection. To London they looked for post-mortems, for analysis and comments by Marx and Engels. But this subsidiary role was elevated to the principal socialist activity because of the prophetic tone adopted by Marx. He might have been shouting curses, but he also raised a voice, drowning the curses, which promised success, and not only success but the inevitability of it.

After the Paris Commune which was stamped out with great brutality, the centre of the working class movement shifted to Germany, and in Germany to Berlin more than any other city. Germany was industrialising rapidly, and the industrialization was greatly acclerated by the acquisition of colonies.

The workers' movement in Germany was largely under the influence of Ferdinand Lassalle, an out and out trade unionist. A small but growing section drawn mainly from the intelligentsia was Marxist. The Social Democratic Labour Party was formed in 1869, five years after the death of Lassalle, but was unable to secure immediately the resolution of the conflict between the followers of Lassalle and Marx. This resolution, which often has been described as 'merger', took place in 1875. Two years later the Socialists won 12 out of the 397 seats in the Reichstag.

Bismarck did not approve of the Socialist entry and in 1879 clamped the Socialist Law which greatly curtailed workers' rights to organize and take action. He also gave to workers old age and sickness benefits—the first scheme in Europe for State insurance of employees.

That was the beginning of a German privileged "aristocracy" among workers. The next decade produced its fighting leaders of the working class movement—August Bebel and Wilhelm Liebnecht. The latter, who was the father of Karl Liebnecht of Roy's time, was among those elected to the Reichstag.

The German movement deserves close study because Roy held that Marxism reached its maturity in Germany. He was impressed by the intellect and humane behaviour of Bernstein, Kautsky and Hilfferding.[10] Bernstein and Kautsky were opponents; the former having picked his socialism among English Fabians, advocates of gradualism. He also thought Marxism needed revision. Kautsky on the other hand remained an orthodox Marxist. Their respective attitudes were well put forth at the Stuttgart Congress.

Colonial issues did not concern either of them as much as the future of the European proletariat. Neither of them any longer were irrevocably committed to revolution. It was to counter their tendencies, and those of Mensheviks in Russia, that Lenin developed his idea of an elitist party of intellectuals identifying itself with proletarian objectives and achieving a revolution.[11]

The strategy and tactics of revolution do not concern us here directly. The growth of patriotism does, and the attitude of defending exploitation of colonies was derived from patriotism.

The German working class was probably more contaminated than the French and the British. As one observer reported, in German working class homes the photographs of Marx and Engels adorned one wall, and those of Bismarck and Moltke another.

When the Kaiser dropped Bismarck in 1890 he also repealed the Socialist Law. Thereafter workers developed an attachment to him which continued till World War I.

The justification of colonial exploitation, though stated to be in the interests of the entire humanity through a misquotation of Marx, was not only an expression of patriotism but also of imperialism.

Throughout the period of the armed truce between 1870 and 1914 Europe was heading for a war. There was rivalry between Germany and Britain in trade, manufactures and colonies, there was a similar rivalry between Germany and France acerbated by the 1870 annexation of Alsace-Lorraine, and also rivalry between Germany and Russia for which Bismarck had provided a basis in stating Germany's "need" to expand eastwards being blocked by Russia.

Socialists realised the menacing prospect of an European war. From the time of Marx and Engels the main trend of socialist thinking was that socialists would have to choose in the event which side to support and the choice would be determined by the side whose victory would advance the cause of socialism. Such a choice between rival imperialisms would have been difficult to reach but the situation was queered by two developments. Trade unions in their bargaining had to secure some amount of recognition from their national Governments. Besides, conscription drafted workers into national armies where they were subjected to discipline rather than free thinking.

At Stuttgart there was a reluctance to recognize that the next war would be imperialist. There were wide differences of opinion among socialists, as the Stuttgart resolution admitted, and, therefore the Socialist Congress pleaded its inability "to lay down the exact form of working-class action against militarism".[12] It however called upon Socialist parliamentarians to refuse the means for the prosecution of war through denying votes against military credits.

Two years later, Kautsky (theoretician of the German Social Democratic Party) diagnosed international war as a crisis in the capitalist system offering the workers the best opportunity to overthrow capitalism.

At Copenhagen Congress in 1910 the Stuttgart formula was repealed though the French delegation supported by the British Independent Labour Party repeated their proposal (first formulated in 1894) that a "general strike of workers simultaneously and internationally organized in the countries concerned" as a means to "hinder and prevent war and to impose on governments recourse to arbitration".

The majority Russian view was like Kautsky's which amounted to saying war was to be welcomed and not prevented because it offered an opportunity to overthrow capitalism. The means for overthrow—defeat or victory—was not specified. Only the Syndicalists in France and Pacifists in Britain were still opposed to war.

In November 1912 the Second International convened a special conference on the threat of war and the issues raised by the Balkan War (between Turkey and Greece) then being fought. The conference declared the proletariat's decision "to reject all attempt to draw them into a conflict where workmen would be directed to fire at other workers."

When the first world war actually broke out a hysteria of patriotism swept over all the European capitals. There were minor attempts at opposition, largely because the working class was finding it impossible to resist the hysteria. In Britain, Ramsay MacDonald courted arrest; in Paris, Jean Jaures was assassinated for opposing war and advocating a general strike.[13] His rival and opponent Jules Guesde joined the Government as Minister.

In Germany the Socialists issued an appeal decrying war but were, as they had been for long, under the threat of the re-enaction of Bismarck's Socialist law. On July 30 the German Socialist Party (SPD) transferred its treasury to neutral Switzerland, apprehensive of seizure by Government, and probably as a preparation for a general strike. The Kaiser then declared: "I no longer know parties, only Germans". There was popular response to the declaration. Karl Legien, the President of the Trade Union Federation, declared that with one-third of workers in the army a general strike was impracticable.[14]

In Russia both Mensheviks and Bolsheviks spoke and voted with a united voice against war credits—they were the only one to honour the Stuttgart Pledge—but Plekhanov (Marxist theoretician and teacher of Lenin) followed the example of the Western social democrats and came out for national defence.

Lenin still maintained the cause of national defeatism and civil war, but he was in exile along with Zinoviev, Bukharin, Sokolonikov and others.

Some Mensheviks and Bolsheviks took up a position intermediate between Plekhanov and Lenin demanding a "democratic" peace without annexations or indemnities. Naturally national defeatism or civil war did not feature in their thought. Trotsky was the most important among these. A position similar to Trotsky's was taken in Germany by Kautsky and in Britain by MacDonald.

This Pacifist or Syndicalist attitude towards war was the one with which Roy should have become acquainted with in neutral U.S.A. and Mexico. The American affiliate of the Second International, IWW, had taken that attitude, being of Syndicalist persuasion. Mexican Socialism was Syndicalist, and the American Radicals who became Roy's friends in Mexico—the Slackers—were Pacifists too. So was MacDonald and the British ILP.

Among the Syndicalists there was no enthusiasm for colonial domination. Mexico had overthrown Spanish rule and had no colonies. Its Syndicalists could not be attached to the idea of the civilizing mission of capitalism. Besides, it was engaged in resisting domination by American and British capitalists. Formally the U.S.A. had no colonies, and its Redicals had no national position to defend; but they were critical of American bourgeois attitudes. Though the question of national defeatism in World War I (after U.S.A.'s entry) did not arise, the Radicals would have welcomed setbacks to American efforts to dominate Central and South America. Roy could not have very well approved of colonial domination, and hence the position of some Second International socialists in regard to colonies must have jarred on his ears.

He was actively engaged in organizing an insurrection in India with German funds and arms. In a sense—a rather remote sense—his position was of a national defeatist. The Government of India was run by the British, but much of the apparatus of a nation-state that the British had created had to collapse before his country could be free.

The class point of view had crept in—but the proletariat was small when he left India, and he had hardly any acquaintance with it. One of the exaggerations of his early Marxist study was to think of Indian liberation in terms of simultaneous liberation of the workers and peasants. This might have been provoked by his American experience but was largely built on later reading of Marxist texts.

It is in this atmosphere that Roy's change from nationalism to internationalism took place. His nationalism was more cultural than attachment to a nation state. When he gave up nationalism he adopted European culture unhesitatingly except for materialism, which was more Marxist than European, and which he adopted only on becoming a convert to Marxism.

Even so, his Mexican work, *India: Past, Present and Future,*[15] is more concerned with denying the spirituality of India and on emphasizing the British exploitation of India than with postulating a thesis on class war. Having engaged in terrorism in India he never abjured violence, except only senseless individual violence. To that extent he resisted the Pacifist influences to which he was exposed while he was in America and Mexico. He approved of war for desirable ends. It is unlikely that before Borodin's visit to Mexico he had much knowledge of Russian communism or Leninism. His adoption of communism and of Leninism, to an extent reflected his rejection of the Second International attitude towards colonies.

The agrarian issue was also a factor. Russia was agrarian, but, under the influence of the Bolsheviks, had been able to achieve a communist revolution though the proletariat was small. Ireland, an agrarian country, had been able to achieve independence without a social revolution and in Poland reluctance to bring about agrarian reforms had delayed independence.

Tactics also played a part, and since Marx, revolutionaries had off and on held that the loss of colonies and markets would hasten a proletarian revolution, though none of them had made a systematic formulation of their ideas. The majority of the Social Democrats of the Second International, reformist as they were, argued that capitalism would prepare the colonies for emancipation, and since the colonies were unable to free themselves by their own efforts they had better wait for a socialist revolution in Europe. Indian nationalists during the same period argued that social reform could wait till independence.

The Theses on the Colonial Question which Roy presented to the Second Congress of the Communist International in July 1920 could not have been the result of his studies subsequent to his meeting with Borodin early in the summer of 1919, but of considerable studies and thinking preceding it, and that could have been the writings of Marx and Engels and the Second International controversies besides his Mexican experience.

Three different kinds of experiences were brought to the Second Comintern Congress. The Russian with Lenin crystallizing it; the Mexican and Indian as put forth by Roy, and the Dutch and Indonesian as summed up by Sneevliet. Russia had effected a revolution and to facilitate it had disowned the Tsarist heritage and promised self-determination to its subject people, and further, had achieved a working arrangement with the Chinese Republic, then strongly anti-imperialist. Russia also engaged in a struggle with the Entente powers, which were not allowing China to be free.

India had not achieved freedom, but Roy had seen for himself the importance of agrarian reforms in Mexico. His disillussionment with his own country's nationalist movement did not permit his asking the Comintern to underwrite the Indian bourgeoisie's struggle for freedom.

Holland still continued to rule Indonesia. Sneevliet as a Dutch socialist had cut himself off from the Second International's advocacy of colonialism and did some organizational work in Indonesia. Probably his experience of organizing in a country where the atmosphere was backward and religious induced in him a certain circumspection. And it was Sneevliet who strongly supported Roy at the Second Congress because of his experience in an Asian colonial country.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. *Documents of the History of the Communist Party of India*, edited by G. Adhikari; New Delhi, 1971; Vol. 1: 1917-22; p. 24.

2. Helene Carrere d'Encaussee and Stuart R. Schram, *Marxism and Asia;* Allen Lane The Penguin Press, 1969; p. 9.

3. Preface to the Russian edition of the *Communist Manifesto* published in 1882. Also, Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Selected Works*, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1969; Vol. 1; pp. 103-4; See also Frederick Engels, *On Social Relations in Russia* in Marx and Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol. 2, p. 395.

4. Marx and Engels, *Selected Works*, Op. Cit., Vol. 2, p. 397.

5. Letter of Karl Marx to Engels dated 10 December 1969 in Marx and Engels, *Selected Correspondence;* Lawrence and Wishart; Reprinted 1943; p. 280.

6. In 1853 Karl Marx wrote two articles on India in the *New York Herald Tribune*: "The British Rule in India" on June 10 and "The Future Results of British Rule in India" on July 22. He also wrote a letter to Engels on June 14, 1953. These three constitute Marx's views on India.

Describing Indian society as "Oriental Despotism", Marx wrote to Engels: "England will have to fulfil a double mission in India: one destructive, the other regenerating—the annihilation of old Asiatic society, and the laying of the material foundations of Western society" (Karl Marx, *Selected Works;* Lawrence and Wishart, London 1945; Vol. 2; pp. 656-7.

7. Eduard Bernstein's collection of articles was published in German in 1899 under the title "The Presuppositions of Socialism and the Tasks of Socialism". The English translation of this original German work was published in 1901. Bernstein maintained in the book that "the standard of living of the working class was in fact rising and they were not being forced into the ever increasing misery which Marx had prophesied. For these reasons, the revolution in the sense of the total overthrow of the existing system might well be not only impossible but unnecessary. Instead changes would come by evolution not by revolution".

See also: James Joll, *The Second International*, 1889-1914: Routledge and Kegan Paul, London and Boston, New Edition, 1974; pp. 92-93.

8. Van Kol's speech and resolution at the Amsterdam Congress of the Second International (14—20 August 1904): Also, *Marxism and Asia*, Op. Cit., p. 126.

9. See Chapter on "Marx and the Second International" in *Marxism and Asia*, Op. Cit., pp. 125-133.

10. *Roy Memoirs*, p. 267.

11. M. N. Roy observed: "Lenin had developed his theory of professional revolutionaries organising themselves into a rigidly centralised party as the instrument for capturing power in behalf of the proletariat" (Roy *Memoirs*, p. 246).

12. James Joll, Op. Cit., p. 207.

13. Ibid, p. 171-2.

14. Karl Legien was the principal organizer of the successful March 1920 strike in Germany paralysing the advance of the Prussian army. See also James Joll, Op. Cit., p. 131 on Karl Legien.

15. This book in Spanish was published under the title, *La India : su pasado, su presente y su pervenir* from Mexico in 1918.

VI. The First Heresy

ALL ANALYTICAL STUDIES OF THE GROWTH OF M. N. ROY'S ideas have suffered from one serious defect—the inability to explain how and when he developed the germ of those ideas which became the subject of so much controversy. The prolonged debate at the Second International revealed that most socialists had accepted the Kipling theme of the *White Man's Burden*, the prominent among them the Dutch and the Germans. Notable among the opponents were the Englishman, Hyndman, already an active protagonist of Indian freedom, and the Pole, Karl Kautsky.

Lenin had to explain this phenomenon of a diminishing revolutionary commitment accompanying the growth of the proletariat in size and importance to the development of a privileged "aristocracy" in the proletariat of industrialised countries. Rosa Luxemburg pointed out that this privileged aristocracy could become a beneficiary of imperialism and support it.[1] It is doubtful if Roy had read either Lenin or Luxemburg while in Mexico; although he might have heard of Lenin's views from Borodin, and perhaps of Rosa's from the same source.

The article he wrote in *Gale's Magazine* while in Mexico, in August 1919, was a reply to the American Radicals and to patriotic British trade unionists and gave the first expression of the development of his Marxist ideas. Significantly, the British Labour Party till then was not socialist. Roy seems to have been acquainted with the Second International debate on the Colonial Question by then, though not in a detailed manner.

The article in *Gale's Magazine* was captioned "Hunger and Revolution in India", and contained the following significant passage :

> "To maintain the Indian people in their present condition of hopeless slavery is a vital necessity for the future existence of the English Capitalist system ; what the Capitalists lose in their struggle with the British workers, they will more than recover by their ruthless exploitation of the hopeless and miserable Indian labourers. Consequently notwithstanding the fact that the English proletarian may gain something as a result of the war, he will never be able to overthrow his capitalist oppressors as long as the workers of India were their's to exploit at pleasure"

The tone of the passage is nationalist to a certain degree —it might have been hard for Roy to get rid of the vocabulary he had been accustomed to—but the content is of international communism. The liberation of India was for him, by August 1919, no longer an end in itself, but also the means to the overthrow of capitalism in Britain.

Three subsequent passages in the same article express the idea still better :

> "They (the British proletariat), and the rest of the world have still to learn that *the struggle for Indian independence is not a local affair, having for its end and purpose the creation of another egoistic nationalism ; the liberty of the Indian people is a factor in world politics, for India is the keystone of British imperialism which constitutes the greatest and most powerful enemy of the Social and Economic Revolution that exists today.*"
>
> "the liberation of India is more than a mere act of abstract justice ; it signifies a long step towards the *redemption of the world from the jaws of the capitalist system*" (emphasis added).

This article was published eleven months before Roy put forward his theses at the Second Congress of the Communist International in 1920 in which he advanced the view that revolution in the agrarian colonies was a precondition for revolution in the industrialised countries.

In giving primacy to revolution in the colonies, Roy was denying the validity of a 1882 prophecy by Engels that once the proletariat had won its victory in Europe and North America "the half-civilised countries will follow us of their own accord".

Soon after the *Gale* article was published, an extraordinary conference of the Socialist Party of Mexico was held between August 25 and September 4, 1919.[2] At that conference, according to Roy, a message from the Secretariat of the Communist International, was read out. "It was drafted by Borodin, in consultation with me", writes Roy. It outlined the communist policy of backing up the anti-imperialist struggle of the oppressed and subject peoples. "The policy", writes Roy in his *Memoirs,* "was elaborated in the theses on National and Colonial Question adopted by the Second Congress of the Communist International, a year later".

On his way from Mexico to Moscow, Roy stopped in Berlin for four months. The duration of this prolonged halt might have been determined by the uncertainties of post-war travel and disturbed conditions in Russia. An almost equally important consideration was that during the war, Berlin had been the operational headquarters of a group of Indian revolutionaries. The Berlin Committee, as the group was called, had arranged with the Kaiser's government for German arms for an insurrection in India. It was on information from that group that Roy had set out to get arms from Batavia and then travelled across the Pacific to the U.S.A. and finally took refuge in Mexico.

He met members of the Berlin Committee, but the meeting was disappointing. They were largely broken men, quarrelling among themselves, who had lost their gamble on German aid, and were unable to discover a new line of action. They were equally unable to shed their emotional attachment to the German alliance and to their own immediate past staked as it had been on the outcome of a conflict between two rival imperialisms.

Roy could see a way out—that of an alliance with new forces which presaged to determine the future of the world. He was working out an alliance with proletarian forces, which unlike imperialisms were not nationalist. He himself had by them outgrown his nationalist moorings.

The situation called for a statement of Indian revolutionary aims in the new context. This Roy did before leaving Berlin for Moscow, and called it *An Indian Communist Manifesto.*[3] There were only three signatories—Roy himself, his wife Evelyn using her newly adopted pseudonym, Santi Devi, and Abani Mukherjee, who had recently arrived from India through Dutch East Indies and Holland.

Other Indians in Berlin probably refused to sign it. At least one of them, Bhupendranath Datta, whom Roy had known from his Calcutta days, has written that he refused to sign it. The reason he assigned for his refusal more than thirty years later contained two significant statements. Ftrst, that Roy was issuing the manifesto in order "to announce to the Communists that he belonged to a party of the exploited workers of India even before going to Moscow". And second, that he suspected that Roy "had promised the Bolsheviks that he would bring about a turn in the Indian revolutionary movement".[4]

The first reason seems an after-thought because Roy was going to Moscow as a delegate of the Mexican Communist Party, and questions about his being a representative of the Indian communists could not have arisen then.

The second suspicion is more relevant. Roy did try to change the direction and character of the Indian revolutionary movement—the evidence is in the manifesto itself—to which he had belonged in his early days, and was still formally connected. Datta did not agree to it in 1920. Probably the others also did not agree, though later they were all to travel to Moscow to seek funds, and return disappointed. Two of them stayed back, Nalini Gupta and G. A. K. Luhani and started working with Roy.[5]

Only an abridged version of the *Indian Communist Manifesto* is available in the National Archives as part of the British Indian Intelligence report, which describes it as "an appeal to the British proletariat to join hands with the coming proletarian revolution in India against both the oppressive imperialism and the sentimental nationalism which would create bourgeois democracy of Indian exploiters".[6]

But the opening lines of the Manifesto itself were addressed to Indian revolutionaries who were told that time had come for them "to make a statement of their principles in order to interest the European and American proletariat in the struggle of the Indian masses, which is rapidly becoming a fight for economic and social emancipation and abolition of class rule".

Other points made in the Manifesto were :

1. "The nationalist movement in India has failed to appeal to the masses, because it strives for a bourgeois democracy and cannot say how the masses will be benefited by independent national existence". Here we find an echo of Roy's debate with American Radicals in New York.
2. "All that the world is allowed to know of the Indian revolutionary movement is the agitation for political autonomy. This has naturally failed to enlist the sympathy of the working class in any country, which must always be indifferent to purely nationalist aspirations".
3. "The growing spirit of rebellion in the masses must be organized on the basis of class struggle in close cooperation with the world proletarian movements".
4. "Because British domination deprives Indians of the elementary right indispensable for organization of such a struggle, the revolutionary movement must emphasize in its programme the political liberation of the country". (Modern trade unions came to be formally organized in India only in 1918, and by the humanitarian nationalists).
5. "The nationalist revolutionary movement, recruited

from educated youths of the middle classes, tried to turn the discontent to an armed uprising against foreign rule. Since the beginning of the present century, terrorism, local insurrections, conspiracies and attempts to revolt have become more and more frequent..... These activities did not inspire the masses with lasting enthusiasm ; the leaders failed to prescribe remedies for the social and economic evils from which workers suffer". Here Roy was giving his judgment of the movement with which he himself was associated as well as pointing out to his erstwhile comrades in the Berlin Committee that they should no longer stick to their old ideas.

6. "The growth of class consciousness in the Indian proletariat was unknown to the outer world till last year, when one of the most powerful and best organized strikes in history was declared....Though the nationalists used it as a weapon against political oppression, it was really the spontaneous rebellion of the proletariat against unbearable economic exploitation. As the workers of the cotton mills owned by native capitalists were the first to walk out it cannot be maintained that the strike was nothing more than a nationalist demonstration". (The reference is probably to the Textile general strike in Bombay which started on January 9, 1919 and involved 125,000 workers).
7. "The tremendous strength which imperialist capitalism derives from extensive colonial possession, rich in natural resources and cheap human labour, must no longer be ignored".
8. "In order to destroy it completely world capitalism must be attacked simultaneously on every front. The British proletariat cannot march towards final victory unless he takes his comrades in the colonies along with him to fight the common enemy". (Here Roy mentions that simultaneous action in the colonies is a precondition for world revolution which, at the

second Congress of the Comintern a few months later he was to emphasize).

9. And finally, Roy makes his appeal to both his Indian as well as to European and British comrades, "We appeal to you to recognize the Indian revolutionary movement as a vital part of the world proletarian struggle against capitalism".

The Theses that Roy presented to the second Congress was more organized than the Manifesto as well as more elaborate than the *Gale* article. He was developing his own ideas. particularly after his meetings with the German communists in Berlin. When Roy was in Berlin, he attended a secret meeting of the German Communist Party which lasted almost the whole night. The meeting decided to call a political general strike to be declared from dawn. A joint committee issued the call which was signed by Wilhelm Pieck and Ernst Meyer on behalf of the Communist Party.

Roy writes :

> "For four days, the big city was dead, shops closed, factories idle, streets deserted in the day, everything enveloped in complete darkness in the night. On the fifth morning, from the same hotel window, I watched the mass of steel-helmeted soldiers marching in the opposite direction, in sullen silence The might of organised labour had triumphed over brute force. . . .It was a great luck to have that experience".[7]

Roy continues :

> "Thalheimer was the first German Communist leader I met soon after my arrival in Berlin. . . . .Thereafter we met frequently and I was invited to secret meetings of communist leaders discussing current problems of the revolution. I was immensely benefitted by the experience, and before long could participate in the discussions. Thalheimer took great pains to give me English rendering of the discussions, ...He was the leader of the party. Paul Levi was still in prison, and Brandler away in Saxony. . . .They all treated me with kindness, affection and respect".[8]

The Theses that Roy presented at the Second Congress contained his broader acquaintance and understanding of Communism besides his own knowledge about its role in colonial countries.

Understandably he was bitter with the Socialist International which he accused of failing to appreciate the importance of the colonial question. "Instead of giving moral and material help to the revolutionary movements in the colonies, the members of the Second International themselves became imperialists".

Roy however recognized that some of the ideas of the Socialist International were derived from those of Karl Marx and Engles. So in his draft theses he proclaimed the Third International as a "fighting body which has outgrown the realm of pure doctrinairism". This of course was changed in the adopted text, but constituted the essence of his heresy.

On various points Roy remained close to Marxist theory and only reached new deductions. He thought the imperialist countries had been able to avoid the crisis of capitalism by investing their surplus in the colonies, and could in the future pass on to the home proletariat the entire surplus value and sustain capitalism through profits in the colonies. Hence he argued that "without the breaking up of the colonial empire, the overthrow of the capitalist system does not appear possible".

Imperialist subjugation in the colonies had prevented social and economic development corresponding to that of Europe and North America (Roy probably meant the emergence of a progressive bourgeoisie to destroy feudalism). As a matter of policy industrial development of the colonies had been retarded, and so the proletariat was small and recent. The burden of population on land was consequently heavy, and a large peasantry was landless. The result of all these was that the spirit of revolt against subjection found expression only through the small educated middle class.

Help to this class did not mean endorsement of the nationalist aspirations of the native bourgeoisie but to "open up the way to the smothered proletariat there". "People in the colonies need not go through the stage of bourgeois democracy", he argued, "though the revolution in the colonies was not going to be communist in the first stages". "But", he said, "if from the beginning the leadership of the revolution is in the hands of a communist vanguard, the revolutionary masses would not be led astray". It could prevent the rise of a native capitalism which in alliance with imperialist capital would make it easy for the transplantation of European capitalism for exploitation in Asia.

In the debate between Roy and Lenin on the questions of tactics and strategy of revolution in colonies, Roy declared in the Commission that "the fate of European revolution depended on revolution in Asia; unless the latter triumphed, the communist movement in Europe would simply count for nothing". "World capitalism", he said, "draws its main resources and income from the colonies, principally from those in Asia". In the first stages, the revolution in the colonies must be carried on with a radical agrarian programme like land re-distribution. In his speech at the Second Congress, he said :

> "Since the establishment of British capitalism in India, the 80% of the population which lives by agrarian work has lost its property and has been transformed into hired labour.....These tens of millions of people have no interest whatsoever in bourgeois nationalist slogans : only one slogan—"Land to the Tillers"—can interest them".[9]

In support of his theses at the Second Congress, Roy developed the theory of *non-capitalist path of development.* The idea existed in its germinal form in Marx, but even more explicitly in Engles and Rosa Luxemburg. In a text written in 1894, shortly before his death, Engels declared that 'countries which have just succumbed to capitalist production' and which have conserved at least some rudiments of communal forms of property can appreciably shorten the process of their development towards socialist society. But these backward countries, according to Engels, would require the support of the Western proletariat. The idea was further developed by Rosa Luxemburg. In Lenin's view, a non-capitalist path of development could be followed only if 'the victorious proletariat of the Soviet Republics' gave its support to the revolutionary movement in the backward countries. The Second Congress however declared its support to this important theoretical formulation of Roy. Discussing Roy's theses, Lenin said at the Congress :

> "There was quite a lively debate on this question (the question of non-capitalist path of development) in the Commission, not only in connection with the Theses I signed, but still more in connection with Comrade Roy's theses, which he will defend here......The question was posed as follows : are we to consider as correct the assertion that the capitalist stage of economic development is inevitable for backward nations now on the road to emancipation and among whom a certain advance towards progress is to be seen since the war ? We replied in the negative. If the victorious revolutionary proletariat conducts systematic propaganda among them, and the Soviet governments come to their aid with all the means at their disposal--in that event it will be mistaken to assume that the backward peoples must inevitably go through the capitalist stage of development".[10]

In the Commission, Roy and Lenin also disagreed on the tactical question, viz, collaboration with national bourgeoisie. The debate however ended in a compromise and modification of the Theses of both Roy and Lenin. While presenting report of the Commission on the National and Colonial Question, which had adopted both Lenin's theses as well as Roy's supplementary theses, after their amendments, Lenin observed :

> "There has been a certain rapprochement between the bourgeoisie of the exploiting countries and that of the colonies, so that very often—perhaps in most cases—the bourgeoisie of the oppressed countries, while it does support the national movement, is in full accord with the imperialist bourgeoisie, i.e. joins forces with it against all revolutionary movements and revolutionary classes. *This has been irrefutably proved*

> *in the Commission* (emphasis added) and we decided that the only correct attitude was to take distinction into account and, in nearly all cases, substitute the term 'national-revolutionary' for the term 'bourgeois-democratic'.[11]

"The significance of this change is", Lenin told the Congress "that we, as Communists, should and will support bourgeois liberation movements in the colonies only when they are genuinely revolutionary".

The lack of serious attention to Roy's theses and the continuing controversy probably resulted from the fact that Roy's original text, and not the one adopted by the Congress after modifications made in the Commission, was included in both the German and Russian editions of the proceedings of the Second Congress and the error was not detected until 1934.[12]

In his *Memoirs,* Roy pays a great tribute to Lenin for the latter's encouragement of what most delegates whispered at the Congress "an Indian upstart".

Roy writes :

> "In our first discussion (before the Congress), he frankly admitted his ignorance of facts, but he took his stand on theoretical grounds. . . .By quoting Plekhanov's authority, I shook his theoretical position. . .he (then) suggested that I should draft an alternative theses. . . .Lenin created a sensation by declaring that prolonged discussion with me had made him doubtful about his own theses. . . . . .it was perhaps the most valuable experience of my life until then. I had the rare privilege of being treated as an equal by a great man who proved his greatness by doing so".[13]

Two contemporary authors, Helene Carrere d'Encaussee and Stuart R. Schram, have discussed and analysed the debate on the National and Colonial question at great length in their book, They commented :

> "Given the composition of the Second Congress of the Communist International, given too the inherent logic of Marxism, which may be regarded as an attempt to Europeanize the world, this controversy necessarily had to be devided in favour of Lenin. Roy was thus obliged to

accept modifications in his thesis--into the much less sweeping claim that revolution in Asia was important" but not that revolution in Asia was the key.[14]

The phenomenon of the transplantation of European capitalism to Asia, to ensure a continued rate of profit, was discussed in the Second Congress. During the debate, Roy pointed out that, since the war, imperialism, far from hindering industrial development in the colonies, was bent on speeding it up in order to create new markets overseas. The national bourgeoisie in the colonies were naturally inclined to seek an understanding with the imperialist powers, and thus found itself opposed to both the urban proletariat and the peasantry. It was only in the most backward countries, Roy contended, that the privileged strata, even the feudal aristocracy, could momentarily play an objectively revolutionary role.

The adoption of Roy's Supplementary Theses at the Second Congress and that too in an amended form is evidence that cobwebs from the Second International's thinking hung about the halls in which the Third held its deliberations.[15]

Roy's assessment of the national bourgeoisie in Asia differed from Lenin's. After the 1911 Chinese revolution, Lenin was so enthusiastic about its leader, Dr. Sun Yat-sen, that he wrote: "In Asia there is still a bourgeoisie capable of standing for a sincere, energetic consistant democracy, a worthy comrade of the great leaders and great revolutionaries of the 18th century in France".[16] Roy had met Sun Yat-sen five years later and was not greatly impressed. He did not think that the bourgeoisie in any Asian country was sincere enough to usher in democracy.

The Second Congress debate has however continued to haunt the Russian imagination to this day because between 1917, the year Lenin had effected the revolution in Russia and 1924, the year he died, Roy was the only person, who had dared to challenge the theoretical formulations of that "great leader of revolution", and even worse, that revolutionary leader had partially accepted and amended his own theses. Even though the disagreement between Roy and Lenin was on an issue which has become largely irrelevant today, the Russians of the present generation seem unable to forget it. Nearly half-a-century after the Second Congress, the *Kommunist,* the ideological journal of the Russian Communist Party, printed a long article on the controversy in its fifth issue of 1968.

Both Roy and Lenin were dead, the Comintern had been wound up in 1943, and national bourgeoisie were in power in most of the colonies of the former imperial powers. Roy had been accused by the new ideologues of the Russian Communist Party (CPSU) of being an ultra-leftist, an "infantile disorder" against which Lenin had warned. The point of the accusation was that Roy had sought deletion from Lenin's Theses of the paragraph emphasizing the need for all Communist Parties to help the bourgeois democratic liberation movements and which Lenin not only conceded but also amended his Theses meeting that objection from Roy. In the *Communist* article as well as in four books published between 1978 and 1983[17] Russian authors have tried to prove that Lenin was not only right but also 'Right' and Roy, an ultra-left.

Roy's own view of the debate was put succinctly in a letter in 1951 :

> "I did recommend formation of Communist parties on the ground that, as a guarantee against the danger of the nationalist bourgeoisie compromising with Imperialism, the movement for national liberation must be socially based on the worker and peasant masses. Lenin did not fully agree, although he allowed my opinion to be recorded and the IV World Congress fully accepted my view".[18]

The fourth Congress of the Communist International in 1922 was the last that Lenin had attended.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Helene Carrere d'Encaussee and Stuart R. Schram—*Marxism and Asia* : Allen Lane the Penguin Press ; 1969 ; p. 22.

2. Karl M. Schmitt, writes in *Communism in Mexico;* University of Texas Press, 1965 : "The orthodox Mexican Communist Party (Partido Communista Mexicano—PCM), founded in 1919, was among the first to be organized in Latin America following the successful Bolshevik Revolution in Russia......More important by far than the Americans (who became involved in Mexican socialism) to Mexican socialism was the Indian nationalist Manabendra Nath Roy......the Mexican socialists held a Congress in Mexico City grom Aug 25 to Sep 4, 1919, financed and greatly influenced by Roy" (pp. 3-5).

3. Documents of the History of the Communist Party of India; ed. G. Adhikari, New Delhi; Vol. 1; 1917-1922; p. 148. Dr. Adhikari, the editor of the volume writes : "This was probably written by Roy while in Berlin sometime in February or March 1920."

4. Bhupendranath Datta—*Aprakasita Rajnaitik Itihas* (Unpublished Political History); p. 252, also quoted in *Documents,* Op. Cit. p. 148

5. Roy *Memoirs,* p. 489

6. *Documents,* Op. Cit., carries the full text in pp. 151-155

7. Roy, *Memoirs,* p. 270

8. Ibid, p. 277

9. *Marxism and Asia,* Op. Cit., pp. 150-151

10. Lenin—*Selected Works;* Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1957; Vol. III; p. 459

11. Ibid, pp. 457-8

12. *Marxism and Asia,* Op. Cit., p. 29

13. Roy, *Memoirs,* pp. 379-80

14. *Marxism and Asia,* Op. Cit., pp. 27-28

15. Ibid

16. Ibid, p. 23

17. The four books published are (1) *National Liberation* ed. by R. Ulyanovsky, 1978; (2) *The Comintern and the East,* ed. by R. A. Ulyanovsky, 1979; (3) *The Comintern and the East: A Critique of the Critique,* ed. by R. A. Ulyanovsky, 1978; and (4) *Revolutionaries from India in the Soviet Union* ed. by Persists. All the books are published by Progress Publishers, Moscow.

18. M. N. Roy's Letter to Allen S. Whiting, author of *Soviet Policies in China,* 1917-24, dated March 11, 1951

VII. The Comintern Debate

FOR 72 YEARS BEFORE M. N. ROY'S APPEARANCE AT THE SECOND Congress of the Third (Communist) International, the communist movement had been engaged in considering whether the pattern of social development which had occurred in some countries of Europe and North America could be induced through political means. In other words could human beings, by active reaction to the environment, change it instead of being merely the passive products of it.

This point will be more clearly understood if we recall that the breakdown of feudalism had occurred through the operation of forces which were not recognizable in their own time. The destroyers of feudalism had not worked according to a programme, had issued no manifesto.

Similarly mercantilism seemed to have developed *suo moto,* and the bourgeoisie had become dominant without planning to be so. The bourgeois political democratic revolution followed, did not precede, economic change. The industrial revolution was largely accomplished before the British reforms of 1832 and 1867. Much of the cruelty and misery accompanying these social changes could probably have been avoided if they had been worked to a plan or programme, and if the leadership had been aware which way things were developing.

In all these developments man was not in the centre. Marx wanted to put him in that decisive position and make him the architect of his own destiny. The *Communist Manifesto* was issued in that spirit in 1848. If political revolutions preceded economic development the transition could be smoother and quicker, and more economical in terms of avoidance of wasteful expenditure of human resources.

The entry of human will in the shaping of massive social and economic changes through the instrument of a political revolution had to bear relation to the existing level of development and the opportunities for human intervention it offered. Economic and social forces were human, but they operated on a scale which invested them with a massiveness comparable to cosmic order.

The human experience which entered into the formulation of Marxist thought was largely West European—countries touched by the Renaissance, turned into nation states ruled by despots subjugating feudal recalcitrants, participating into voyages of discovery and the trade that followed, sprouting a new rich trading class resentful of traditional curbs on its enterprise, throwing up scientists finding errors in the accepted concepts of nature, giving birth to entrepreneurs borrowing ideas from the scientists to reduce expenditure of human labour, and producing thinkers enthusiastic to assimilate the recent European experience and reach out to hitherto unknown frontiers.

The European experience was so engrossing that in spite of having charted lands and seas far beyond the confines of Europe, of having identified and classified plants and animals unknown to Europe, and translated the literature of all nations, the world seemed a European world. The political expression of this sense of wonder at their own achievement was Imperialism.

Transplantation of European culture in North America did not seriously disrupt this engrossment. Nor was this feeling of European wholeness challenged in the emergence of Russia as a power because the Russian elite had to a certain extent Europeanized itself.

The industrial revolution had created a large proletariat in Western Europe. In countries like Britain it was the largest section of the population, and with liberalized franchise, expectation was that the proletariat would rule if it was only revolutionary enough. Being assertive would not be enough; the assertion had to be based on an ideology of the working class being not only employees but owners of the means of production.

The proletarian ideology necessarily confined Marxism and Communism to the part of the world which had already undergone the industrial revolution—that is Western Europe and North America. Till 1904 when Sen Katayama came from Japan, the only industrialized country outside Europe and North America, the first two Internationals had no members from countries beyond the two shores of the North Atlantic.

The prospect of a proletarian revolution which had seemed imminent in 1848 went on receding from the fully industrialized countries. In Marx's own time first Britain and then France, Spain and Italy became unresponsive to Marxism. They found substitute proletarian ideologies—in Britain of hard bargaining for wages, and in the other three of consigning the destiny of the working class to trade union activity instead of bidding for revolution. The working class was satisfied with demanding higher wages, remaining wage-earners without aspiring to be rulers of the country, or owners of the means of production.

Communism therefore had to seek outlets in the non-industrialized countries. Theoretically agrarian societies were ripe only for throwing off feudalism, for the bourgeois democratic revolution. To suit their requirements Marx had to think of a political revolution which would bypass the capitalist stage and reach communism.[1] He was casting longing eyes at Russia.

Theoretical prejudices die hard, and even after the Russian revolution the feeling was that Russia was not the proper place for a communist revolution, and the Russian revolution could only be saved by a revolution in Germany. The German proletariat however refused to come out and man the barricades for a revolution even though it was powerful enough to resist in March 1920 an attempted putsch by the Prussian army against the Weimar regime through a general strike.[2]

So strong was the prejudice against a revolution in an agrarian country that Eduard Bernstein, who had virtually succeeded Engels in the leadership of Marxist thought, did not think that Bolsheviks could hold out for long in Russia. He called Lenin a reckless adventurist who would disrupt the international socialist movement with his fanatical ideas, and was now gambling with the fate of his own country.[3]

Colonies were not only agrarian but also politically dependant. During the years of the Socialist International proletarian parties in the imperialist countries had virtually claimed the guardianship of colonial peoples. During the same period the working class in imperialist countries had grown prosperous, and acquired through franchise a certain amount of participation in the affairs of their countries. The prosperity was commonly attributed to the possession of colonies, and therefore the working class had generally avoided any commitment on the future of colonies apart from forecasting a bright future for them once the proletariat came to power in the metropolitan countries.

Yet the truth was that socialist parties in metropolitan countries no longer aspired to overthrow capitalism. The reason why all the socialist paries turned patriotic during the first world war, which was a war between rival imperialisms, was that each believed that the exploitation of colonies enabled the working class in Europe to live, as well as it did.

When Plekhanov was dramatically shaking hands with Katayama at the Socialist International's Brussels Congress in 1904 he was expressing his opposition to war, not imperialism. The following year Japan came victorious out of the war with Russia and turned imperialist by occupying Korea. Katayama was assured of a place in the Socialist International. Ten years later Plekhanov was not as much opposed to war as he was at Brussels.

Two Indians, Madame Cama and S. R. Rana tried to join the Socialist Congress in Stuttgart in 1907 and to interest it in the Indian—not all colonies—demand for freedom. They were not admitted to membership—on the ostensible plea that they did not represent a Socialist Party in India—but were allowed to attend the session, largely because of support from two individuals,—Jean Jaures, the French leader (assassinated on the outbreak of the war for his opposition to working class participation), and Henry Meyers Hyndman, a British, friend of Karl Marx, and a supporter of the Indian demand for freedom. Individuals are less important than parties and movements. Madame Cama's address to the Congress was suffered, but the resolution she tried to smuggle in was not put to vote.

The Third International was the inheritor of many of the attitudes of the Second. Alfred Rosmer, who attended the Second Congress of the Comintern as a French delegate, found that on the question of trade unions several of the resolutions put forward by the leadership "did no more than take up ideas current in the Second International." He particularly mentions in his book that the social democrats being "so confident of being depositories of truth that they merely set out their points of view, having decided in advance to pay no attention to the remarks of their opponents".[4]

If that could be the attitude on a matter of such immediate concern to the proletarians of Europe as trade unions, the persistence of Second International ideas on a distant matter like the colonies (an issue on which the socialists had a guilty conscience) can be presumed without offence to facts.

The debate at the second Comintern Congress had two diametrically opposite points of reference, and was almost entirely between two people with vastly different backgrounds. One of the points of reference was inherited from the Second International—of the guardianship of the colonial peoples by the proletariat of the metropolitan country—and the other was Lenin's commitment to self-determination of subject nationalities. The Leninist commitment was not derived from Marxist or Socialist thought, but from British Liberalism which since 1835 had held that the purpose of British rule in India was to prepare Indians for self-rule. The self-rule was not to come as a result of a socialist revolution in Britain but on Indians acquiring the capacity of administering their own affairs.

The Marxist contribution to Lenin's ideals on the subject was from Otto Bauer's *Nationalities Question and Social Democracy* (1906) which favoured self-determination for nationalities in heterogenous empires like those of Austria-Hungary and Russia, not making it contingent upon a proletarian revolution either in Russia or Hungary or in the subject nationalities. What Bauer said could be applicable to an equally heterogenous empire like the British, though the Austrian theoretician did not engage himself with overseas colonies. The significant point in Bauer's reasoning was that cultural elements in nationhood overrode class cosciousness.

Lenin, class-conscious at home but liberal outside, had also been enthused by reform movements in Turkey and Persia when he was still young and impressionable. He was swept off by admiration for the Chinese revolution of 1911—in each of these he saw limitations on (European) imperialism drawn by Asian nationalism. Since he had described imperialism as the highest form of capitalism he welcomed these limitations, the good liberal that he was. Yet he had to render what was due to Marxism, and so he had imagined that at least in China the revolution was engaged in terminating feudalism.

Roy approached the colonial question--at that time often called Eastern—from a wholly Marxist point of view, entirely shedding the nationalism he had earlier subscribed to. His thesis rejected the Socialist International's gradualism—that a revolution in the metropolitan country must precede, or be the usher of a revolution in the colonies. On the other hand, since the colonies sustained capitalism in imperialist countries only a revolution in the colonies could enable the overthrow of capitalism in the metropolitan countries. It was not only a question of priority in sequence but of a cause-and-effect relationship.

His own experience of colonial nationalism was that it trimmed only the branches of feudalism but nourished its main trunk. National movements could be revolutionary only if they adopted a revolutionary ideology, and for this he suggested putting on the order of the day a bourgeois democratic revolution accompanied by land reforms graduating to a fuller revolution under the leadership of a revolutionary party. He cited the fact that the nationalist movements in the colonies had remained confined to a small educated middle class, and had largely failed to assume the leadership of the masses, whom he considered objectively revolutionary.

If the revolution had to occur first in the colonies the Marxist apple cart was overturned. The guardianship by metorpolitan socialist parties had no justification to continue. All this was so new that the Congress could not really comprehend. Lenin "frankly admitted" to Roy his ignorance of facts, but was reluctant to consider Gandhi as anything but "revolutionary". Roy contended that Gandhi as a religious and cultural revivalist was bound to be a "reactionary" socially and culturally, however revolutionary he might appear politically.[5]

Lenin's theses made the following significant points, but not in the order put here :

> "Lenin contended that the colonial peoples distrusted even the proletariat of the metropolitan countries and laid the blame on 1914-19 social patriots for treachery in defending the right of their bourgeoisie to enslave the colonies and plunder the financially dependent countries.
>
> (He omitted admission of the fact that this tendency had appeared as early as 1870 and continued since). From this he argued that it was "the duty of the class-conscious communist proletariat of all countries to be specially cautious and particularly attentive to the national feelings, in themselves out of date", in enslaved countries.
>
> The Communist International has the duty of supporting the revolutionary movement in colonies and backward countries only with the object of rallying the constituent elements of the future proletarian parties....and educating them....to fight against bourgeois-democratic trends in their own nation.

> All Communist parties must support by action the revolutionary liberation movements in the backward countries ....This obligation refers in the first place to the active support of the workers in that country on which the backward nation is financially, or as a colony, dependent.
>
> Above all, efforts must be made to give the peasant movements in backward countries as revolutionary a character as possible....and thus establish as close a tie as possible between the West European communist proletariat and the revolutionary peasant movements in the East, in the colonies and the backward countries".[6]

M. N. Roy made the following points :

> "The fountainhead from which European capitalism draws its main strength is no longer to be found in the industrial countries of Europe, but the colonial possessions and dependencies.
>
> The capitalist structure of England would have collapsed under its own weight long ago, but for the colonies which had enabled English imperialism to keep the British proletariat under the domination of the bourgeoisie.
>
> Without the breaking up of the colonial empire, the overthrow of the capitalist system in Europe does not appear possible.
>
> The Communist International must establish relations with forces in the colonies working for the overthrow of imperialism but such relationship is not tantamount to upholding the doctrine of nationalism.
>
> The bourgeois democratic movements in the colonies are limited to the small middle class which does not reflect the aspirations of the masses without whose active support the national freedom of the colonies will never be attained. For the overthrow of foreign imperialism, the first step towards revolution in the colonies, the cooperation of bourgeois nationalist elements may be useful but the Communist International must not find in them the media through

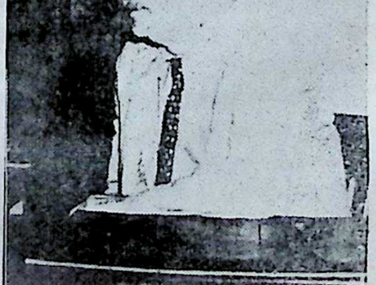
> which the revolutionary movement in the colonies should be helped.
>
> The supposition that the people in the colonies are bound to go through the stage of bourgeois democracy is wrong. The revolution in the colonies is not going to be a communist revolution in the first stage. But if from the beginning the leadership of the revolution is in the hands of a communist vanguard the revolutionary masses would not be led astray.
>
> To initiate at an early stage the class struggle in the colonies means to awaken the people to the danger of transplanted European capitalism which overthrown in Europe may seek refuge in Asia".[7]

Roy's ideas were so different from what Marxists had been thinking that they could not have found acceptance at the second Congress. The fact that they were contained in a thesis supplemenary to Lenin's made things easier for the Comintern members. They were not called upon to accept it alone but along with Lenin's.

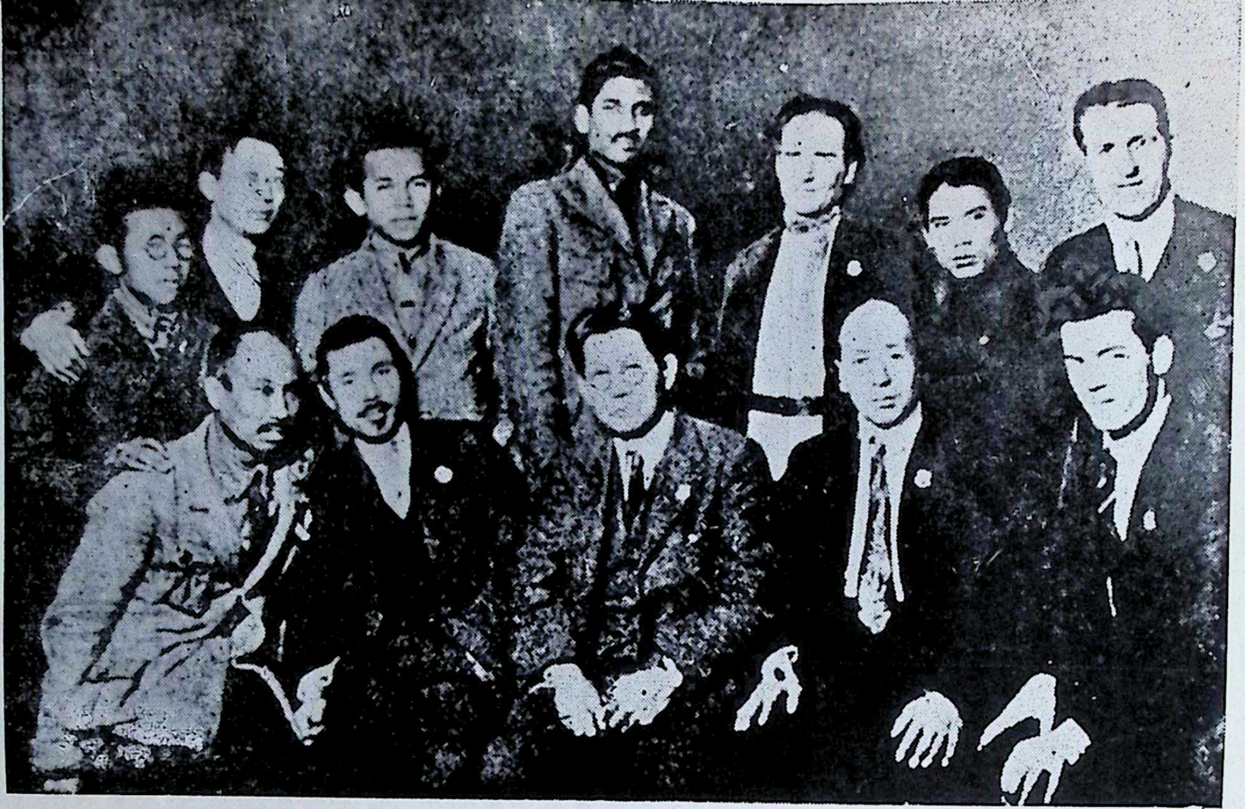
Except for Sneevliet, who had organized a socialist party in Java, and Safarov, who had been in central Asia, none else had experience of the colonies. Sneevliet was in general agreement with Roy's thesis, but averred that the meaning of Lenin's and Roy's theses was identical. The differences lay solely in finding the correct relation between the nationalist and socialist revolutions in backward countries and in the colonies.

Sneevliet also thought there was no question on the agenda of the Congress of such great importance for the future development of the world revolution as the national and colonial question. He confirmed from his experience in Java that the situation in that colony "is altogether ripe for revolutionary propaganda". But while making this point Sneevliet made a significant remark: "I have the impression that *with a few exceptions, this Congress of the Third International has not thoroughly grasped....the great importance of the eastern question*".[8] (emphasis added).

Rosa Luxemburg



August Thalheimer



Sitting from Left : Ho Chi Minh, Eizo Kondo, Sen Katayama and Malabu (4th)
Standing : Tan Malaka (Indonesia, 3rd from left) & M. N. Roy (4th)
(At the Fouth Congress of the Comintern, 1922)

Sneevliet's impression was confirmed by the next speaker, Serrati, who wanted fraternal salutations to be sent to the colonial peoples accompanied by a declaration that "the proletariat has the right to take advantage of national insurrections in order to transform them finally into a social revolution....but it must not, above all in the backward countries, support the bourgeoisie".[9]

Tony Quelch, whose father Harry had in 1906 supported Indian nationalist aspirations, stated that the rank-and-file English worker would consider it treachery to help enslaved peoples in their revolt against British rule. He recalled that parties of the Second International promised to behave in a revolutionary way, but did not help revolts in the colonies. And he added that the attitude persisted among the "majority of the parties which have left the Second International and wish to join the Third International".[10]

In the following year at the Third Congress the colonial question did figure on the agenda but little attention was paid to it. The Eastern delegation were given not enough time to speak, and at the Commission which examined the resolution, as Roy protested before the plenary session of the Congress "not a single representative of the European and American delegations was present". The Commission therefore decided to adopt "no theoretical resolution" on the subject.

At the Fourth (1922) Congress, Roy had to remind the Assembly that the theses adopted at the Second Congress had laid down that "the communist parties of the Western countries and in particular of the imperialist countries, should do all in their power to develop this liberation movement". He felt that the Communist International was not prepared to take the Eastern question seriously.[11]

The social character of the liberation momements was not uniform. In colonial countries where capitalism had developed, he argued, a weak native bourgeoisie was struggling against a powerful foreign bourgeoisie and therefore the native bourgeoisie does not direct its struggle against feudalism with which it maintains an alliance and from which it draws strength and support. A proletarian class was in the process of being created which in alliance with the landless peasantry could profitably intervene in the struggle between the two competing bourgeoisies.

The existence of communist parties in the Eastern countries and their historical role became more significant from another standpoint, argued Roy. The bourgeoisie had come in the colonies some 150 years too late to play the role of liberator, and so "communist parties are necessary, even if for the moment they are merely cells".

At this 1922 Congress, Roy for the first time. spoke about his looking at developments in the colonies from a new line of investigation—the line which was six years later to be called the 'theory of decolonization.'

He argued that the dislocation of capitalist equilibrium in Europe was forcing imperialism to seek new markets by furthering the industrial development of countries such as India and China. "It may be objected that this is impossible, for the interest of imperialism lies in keeping the colonial countries in an economically backward state in order to sell them manufactured products......Yes, but this is a completely mechanical way of looking at things".[12] He was elaborating an idea which he had hinted at in his Second Congress theses, that of transplantation of European capitalism to Asia, but that paragraph had been blue-pencilled during the amending process.

Roy took the opportunity to reiterate his demand for devement of "our parties in these countries, in order to take charge of the leadership".

Safarov, who followed Roy, was more outspoken. "In spite of the decisions of the Second Congress of the Communist International, the communist parties of the imperialist countries have extraordinarily little to deal with the national and colonial questions". Safarov went on to cite instances of delinquency.[13]

At the Fifth Congress (1924), Roy asked whether the Communist International had succeeded in establishing a link with the national bourgeoisie in the colonial countries, and himself answered the question in the negative. All that had been achieved was "establishment of 'friendly diplomatic relations' between the Soviet Government and 'nominally free countries'." China was the most important among the 'nominally free'.

No relationship between the revolutionary proletariat of the Western capitalist countries and the popular movements of the Eastern countries had been established as wished by the Second Congress. Roy seemed to be answering people who had contended that the proletariat or the working masses had no monopoly over the right to self-determination. He conceded that point but argued that it was necessary to establish as to which class in the colonies had the "greater objective potential for waging the struggle all the way through to complete victory" of the national liberation movement. He contended that the Indian bourgeoisie had called off its 1920-22 movement when the revolutionary forces had become dangerous, and thereby allowed a further lease of life to British imperialism in India.

Roy concluded by declaring: "Surely then, we cannot countinue to insist on a formula which holds that the coloinal bourgeoisie is an objectively revolutionary force which we would support and with which we should establish relations? This would be an utterly ridiculous stand to take......"[14]

But Manuilsky, with the weight of the Russian party behind him, accused Roy of nihilism for thinking that the proletariat and working classes could bring about self-determination to colonial countries.[15]

The proletarian parties in the imperialist countries had not helped the national liberation movements in colonial countries, nor had they encouraged peasant movements in those countries, or spectacularly assisted the communist movement.

But all through this period, in spite of Roy, the sentiment in the Comintern was that the colonial countries being undeveloped needed guardianship from the proletarian parties of the metropolitan countries. The guardinaship idea prevailed. At least it appears so retrospectively because by 1927 the conduct of communist activity in India was entrusted to the Communist Pary of Great Britain—which was a group with negligible influence in its own country and none in India.

That for seven years Roy was allowed to direct communist activities in India, without being resident in either India or Britain, was partly due to there being no outstanding Indian or British communist. Tony Quelch was a friend of Roy; Rathbone, a virtual disciple, ready to write with Roy the *Decline and Fall of the British Empire,* a book, if it had been completed, would have been a study in decolonization.

Later communist leaders in Britain, the two Dutt brothers of part Indian parentage, were not as considerate of the limitations of the British working class. But even they, after the CPGB had failed to make any headway in British politics, obliquely admitted that the only way to a proletarian revolution in the metropolitan country was through a revoluion in the most improtant colony. Therefore they sent several British communists to India for organizing a revolution when there was no attempt at a revolution in Britain.

Their efforts were not successful but that is another story; however, the guardianship of the Indian communist movement once claimed in 1927 was maintained till 1947, the year of Indian independence.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Letter of Karl Marx in Marx and Engels, *Works*, Vol. 19, p. 108 quoted in *Marxism and Asia,* p. 11

2. The reference is to the failure of the German Communist Party to organize an uprising in 1923 even though it was able to resist the Prussian army in March 1920 by organizing a general strike. See also : Roy, *Memoirs,* pp. 269-271

3. Roy, *Memoirs,* p. 267

4. Alfred Rosmer—*Moscow Under Lenin,* Monthly Review Press, New York and London, 1971, p. 73

5. Roy, *Memoirs,* p. 380. On the Roy-Lenin debate and controversy, see also :

   (a) Franz Borkeneau—*World Communism, A History of the Communist International,* Ann Arbor, 1962; p. 292

(b) E. H. Carr—*The Bolshevik Revolution*, 1917-23, Vol. 3; p. 257
(c) Alfred Rosmer, Op. Cit., p. 117 and
(d) *Marxism and Asia*, Op. Cit., pp. 26-45, pp. 149-167, and pp. 187-203

6. Extracts from the theses of Lenin adopted at the Second Congress as published in *The Documents of the History of the Communist Party of India*, Vol. 1, 1917-1922, New Delhi, 1971, ed. by G. Adhikari; pp. 198-205

7. From Roy's original draft Theses published in *Documents*, Op. Cit., pp. 180-188

8. From Sneevliet's speech published in *Marxism and Asia*. p. 164

9. From Serrati's speech published in *Marxism and Asia*. pp. 165-67

10. *Marxism and Asia*, p. 159
11. Ibid, p. 190
12. Ibid, p. 192
13. Ibid, p. 193
14. Ibid, pp. 201-3
15. Ibid, p. 203

VIII. Test of Heresy in China

ROY'S COLONIAL THESES (ADOPTED AS SUPPLEMENTARY TO Lenin's) ran contrary to the main trend of Marxist thought which held that the proletarian revolution would occur first in the industrialized metropolitan countries which in their turn would liberate the colonies. This axiom of Marxist thought was tenaciously held, even though there were passages in Marx's writings wich indicated possibilities of agrarian countries transitioning to socialism by-passing capitalist development.

The Russian revolution did not induce Marxists to revise their opinion. On the other hand, they failed to take advantage of the revolutionary situation which developed in China following the May 30 shooting in the industrial city of Shanghai in 1925. China was not an industrial country. It had a small proletariat whose influence was negligible compared to agrarian masses.

Events in China during 1927 when Roy was the Comintern representative there have to be viewed against the background of a sudden increase in Communist influence in the Kuomintang and spontaneous revolt by workers and peasants. The leaders of the Chinese party were unable to grasp the significance of the directive they received from the Comintern Executive's Seventh Plenum in November 1926. As Roy himself wrote later : "It appeared to them like a heresy".[1]

The Chinese Communist Party at various stages in its growth till 1927 reflected official communist thought as expounded in Europe. It had occasions to revise its opinions, but since the revisions had not occurred as a result of local thinking the party was unable by itself to formulate its policies according to the realities of the situation. The party was formed in 1921 under the leadership of Chen Tu-hsiu, whose initial stand was that the communists in China should have nothing to do with the Kuomintang, the party of Chinese nationalism. He also argued that an alliance between the revolutionary proletariat and the national bourgeoisie was a deviation from the principles of Communism.

For Chen Tu-hsiu, then a Professor of Social Sciences at the National University in Peking and one of the leaders of a Westernizing literary movement, the second Comintern Congress may as well not have been held. His views were distant from both Lenin's and Roy's, and closer to those of European communists like Serrati.

Then Sneevliet, the Dutch Communist, who had supported Roy at the second Comintern Congress and had experience of organizing a socialist movement in Indonesia, went to China and argued with the communists that proletarian support to the national movement did not mean *proletarian surrender to the capitalists* (Italics added).[2] Sneevliet's advice to the communists did not conflict with either Lenin's or Roy's theses, and admirably suited the Russian and Chinese governments, who were negotiating mutual cooperation.

The convert Chen Tu-hsiu took the lesson so seriously that throughout his Chairmanship of the CCP, that is till August 7, 1927, he would not permit sharpening of the class struggle in the villages lest it weakens the nationalist front.

In 1923 the Kuomintang agreed to open its membership to individual communists following a negotiation between the Russian General Joffe and Dr. Sun Yat-sen. This helped the growth of the Communist Party of China which between 1924 and 1926 enlarged its membership from 800 to 54,000. It was able to organize 7 mlilion peasants in unions and 2 million workers in a Federation of Labour.[3] This rapid numerical expansion led to the belief that association with the Kuomintang was essential to the existence of the Communist Party. Ideological development could be sacrificed for the time being.

On Kuomintang's part the association was entirely dictated by opportunist considerations The ups and downs of Sun Yat-sen's own career between 1911 and 1920 bore witness to the weakness of Chinese nationalism, of it not being a sentiment adequately strong to fight the imperialist powers or the war-lords. The nationalists felt that the communists had the secret of the technique of mobilizing the peasants and the workers, and of carrying the nationalist movement beyond the confines of the microscopic westernized intelligentsia which had started it. Sun Yat-sen also wanted westernization of China but without any structural changes in the Chinese society, and so he, and his followers, were looking for technicians of revolution who would not alter the content of revolution from the purely national to social.

Chou En-lai and Chu Teh had both been indoctrinated in Europe. They were modernists, and nationalists, and only superficially communists. Mao Tse-tung had never gone out of China. His inspiration was also nationalist. At one point in his career Mao was close to Hua Han-min, one of the leaders of the right wing in the Kuomintang, and "a representative of the comprador bourgeoisie". Among the senior leaders only Liu Shao-chi was Moscow-oriented ; the rest were all China-oriented and nationalist. Tsai Ho-sen also went to France but was less nationalist than his friend Mao or others with a background similar to his, such as Chou En-lai and Chu Teh.

In July 1923, Mao had declared that merchants were the leaders of the national liberation.[4] A month earlier a manifesto issued by the Third Congress of the CCP had declared that the Kuomintang must be the central force in the national revolution and assume its leadership. The same Congress decided that the communists should relinquish to the Kuomintang their control over the labour movement.[5]

It is necessary to understand the outlook of the Chinese communist leadership. It was not prepared to lead the masses in 1923. In 1926 on receiving the directive of the seventh

Plenum of the ECCI Chen Tu-hsiu telegraphed a protest to Moscow arguing that officers of the Nationalist Army hailed from the landowning class and would turn against the (left Kuomintang) government if a programme of agrarian reforms was taken up.[6]

Objective conditions however do not lend themselves to tailoring by the subjective inclinations of leaders of political movements. Developments take place much to the discomfiture of ambivalent and dilatory leaders.

Since 1919 there were mass protests throughout China on the Allies (victorious in World War I) transferring to the Japanese the territorial concessions on Chinese land enjoyed formerly by the defeated power Germany. A tide of nationalism had swept China. There were strikes and demonstrations which had been put down by the Japanese and other imperialist powers.

In January 1922 seamen at Hongkong struck work and won. A federation of trade unions was established. In October workers in the Chihli coalfields were massacred. There was a strike followed by a massacre of workers on the British-owned Peking-Hankow railway, but the workers' movement had shown no sign of weakening.

Meanwhile Sun Yat-sen's government had established itself at Canton. The Russian General Joffe had met him and promised arms, and Sun Yat-sen realized that the workers' anti-imperialist struggle was stronger than the nationalists'. So he let Borodin, who was sent by the Comintern in 1923 at his request, to reorganize the Kuomintang and draft its new Constitution, and sent Chiang Kai-shek to Moscow for military training. The Whampoa Military Academy, of which Chiang Kai-shek became the Commandant, was established to build up an army which could subdue warlords and give China territorial unity.[7]

In October 1924 the Paper Tigers revolt of the pro-imperialist traders and compradors was suppressed but on March 12, 1925 Sun Yat-sen died. A struggle for succession followed with Chiang Kai-shek and Wang Ching-wei ranged against each other. In May there was a strike in the Japanese cotton mills at Tsingtao, and on May 23 the Kuomintang adopted a resolution for the unification of the country "through a revolutionary struggle" and not "through negotiations with reactionary cliques or opportunist alliances".[8]

On May 30 there was the Shanghai massacre of striking workers, probably in reaction to "the victory of the left wing" which was followed on August 19, 1925 by the assassination of Liao Chung-hai, the Kuomintang Finance Minister who wanted to ameliorate the conditions of workers and peasants. The head of the government, Hua Han-min, who was suspected to have been involved in the assassination, had to be sent to Moscow,[9] as ambassador.

In October 1925 the second Hongkong strike took place and an army recruited from among the strikers was formed. It came to be called the Iron Army. Elections within Kuomintang in January 1926 for its Central Executive had resulted in a defeat of the extreme right led by Chiang Kai-shek which had been objecting to communist influence. Leftists who favoured cooperation with the communists scored a dramatic victory.[10] Their leader was Wang Ching-wei.

On March 20, 1926 Chiang Kai-shek carried out his coup, and sent Wang Ching-wei into exile.[11] To palliate the Government of Canton, in July he undertook the Northern Expedition to unite the country. The vanguard of this expedition was provided by the Iron Army. Communists and peasant leaders worked behind the enemy lines. The Northern Expedition was successful. The Yangtse was reached and in December 1926 the Iron Army occupied the British concession at Hankow. The left Kuomintang government shifted its headquarters from Canton in the South to Wuhan—a joint name for Hankow and the two adjacent cities of Woochang and Kiukong, in Central China.

By February 1927 there was a demand for the return of Wang Ching-wei. In March 1927 Chiang occupied Shanghai and Nanking. The Wuhan Government dismissed Chiang.[13] Wang Ching-wei returned, and through a second Northern Expedition, the Iron Army reached Chengchow, further towards Peking.

The situation had been revolutionary for about two years, and when the Comintern Executive's Seventh Plenum met in Moscow in November 1926 the need was felt for action on a definite programme, and to abandon the policy of *ad hoc* decisions by which the Communist Party of China had so far acted.

In the Comintern itself there was inadequate appreciation of the fact of two sets of theses on the National and Colonial question being adopted at its Second Congress in 1920. Few took them as alternatives for two kinds of colonial areas, which they were eventually to prove themselves to be. The tendency was to treat only Lenin's theses as operative and to ignore Roy's. The failure of attempts to carry the flag of revolution into the industrially advanced countries of Europe by 1924 recalled attention to Roy's contention that revolution would first take place in the colonies whence metropolitan capitalism drew its strength.

China was not directly ruled by any imperialist power, but the four powers (Britain, U.S.A., France and Japan) in concert controlled its custom duties and through the duties its trade. Each of them held territorial concessions in which they established industries and exploited cheap labour. Some of them owned railways and steamer companies. They had a hold on the financial and credit institutions.

Disappointments in Europe following failure of the German revolution led Stalin to proclaim in 1924 that the preservation of socialism in the solitary state where a proletarian party was in power was the principal Comintern objective. Stalin was asking for a change in policy--in fact he was questioning one of the basic postulates of Marxism as understood till then that the revolution had to be global or fail. An ideological feud developed within the Comintern which has been largely obscured by the personal struggle for power between Stalin and Trotsky.

The corollary to the ideological shift initiated by Stalin was to abandon attempts at revolution in European countries even if they seemed ripe for it. If a revolution had to be attempted the trying had to be in the colonies. But the colonial experience was disappointing too. Collaboration with the national organization in Indonesia, the *Sarekat Islam,* had been unsuccessful.[14] The nationalists viewed communists with suspicion and had expelled them.

In China the nationalist organization had been built through communist mobilization, and though communists had gained by association with the Kuomintang they had reached a position where they need not pull chestnuts out of the fire for others. The advance of the Iron Army and the peasant mobilization accompanying the Northern Expedition had clearly demonstrated that the Communist Party of China could and should make a bid for leadership on its own or forfeit what it has already gained. In fact counter-revolution had made its first moves through Chiang's coup, and if the communists tarried the Kuomintang would take the offensive.

Since 1922, Roy had been a persistent critic of the manner in which the Comintern was guiding the CCP. As long as his 1920 theses held a supplementary and therefore a subsidiary position, he was not listened to with sufficient attention. At the Seventh Plenum he was allowed a hand in drafting the Executive resolution which went as directive to the Chinese Communist Party.

In 1925 Roy had in fact wanted to return to India and made a request to that effect to Stalin.[15] The return to India involved risking imprisonment, whereas in China the situation was safer. Soviet Russia had diplomatic relations with two Chinese regimes—one in the north and the other in the south. Besides competition among rival imperialist powers rendered China a safer country to operate in. So in December 1926 Roy was asked to proceed to China to implement the programme.[16]

Within the Comintern however there was a struggle by Stalin for the consolidation of his power. He needed to subdue Trotsky who advocated a leftist policy of world revolution. Attempts to carry the revolution in Germany had failed, and

Trotsky was under attack. Roy and Bukharin had sided with Stalin and went up in the Comintern hierarchy. Roy reached the zenith of his Comintern career in 1926.[17]

Stalin sent Roy to China also because as he (Stalin) said that the supplementary theses adopted at the (1920) Second Congress of the Comintern had particular reference to India and China. These theses were Roy's.

Writing in a Russian Party organ—and the Russian party by then had become dominant in the Comintern—*Derevensky Kommunist* on May 9, 1927 when Roy was already in China, Stalin contended that Roy's theses had been adopted as a supplement to Lenin's "in order to single out from the backward colonial countries, which have no industrial proletariat, such countries as China and India".[18]

Four days later, talking to students at Sun Yat-sen University (in Moscow), Stalin argued that in deciding the issue of the immediate formation of Soviets of *workers*' and peasants' deputies in China, "It was not Lenin's theses that must be borne in mind, but Roy's which were adopted by the same Second Congress of the Comintern, and which speak of the formation of *workers*' and peasants' Soviets in countries such as China and India".[19]

Stalin made these two declarations while the Fifth Congress of the Chinese Communist Party was in progress, and Roy was attending it as the Comintern's special representative. In the quotations from Stalin reproduced above the emphasis is in the original, which shows that Stalin was in favour of the proletariat assuming the hegemony in national movements in countries like China and India. On April 30, Roy told the CCP Fifth Congress that "the time has come when the proletariat must have the courage to demonstrate that it is willing and able to lead the revolution if the petty bourgeoisie proves incapable of doing so".[20]

The crucial question was of "courage". Addressing the Seventh Plenum in Moscow, Roy had maintained that in the immediate stages the Chinese revolution must primarily be an agrarian revolution, and the success of the Chinese fight against imperialism depended upon drawing the peasants, the overwhelming majority of the people, into the struggle under proletarian leadership.

The leading figures of the Chinese Communist Party(CCP), Roy later wrote in *Revolution and Counter-Revolution in China*, simply did not see the chances for revolutionary action. "They mostly came from the petit-bourgeois intellectuals and were closely connected with the Kuomintang politicians."[21] The Seventh Plenum resolution had already pointed out the formidable list of enemies of class struggle in China : foreign imperialism, Chinese militarism, survivals of large land ownership, the rural gentry, the merchant-userer capitalists, and partly even the upper kulak strata of the peasant population. There were too many enemies to contend with, and the CCP leadership was afraid of taking on all of them.

It relied heavily on militarism. T'an P'ing-shan, later Minister of Agriculture in the Wuhan Government and a communist, in his report to the seventh Plenum did not favour a withdrawal form the Kuomintang, but at the same time wanted the communists to solve the agrarian question. "The land owning class represents the base of Chinese militarism", he told the ECCI. "In order to put an end to the semi-feudal system of the militarists we must solve the agrarian question. Only then we shall be able to shatter the militarists' base".[22] The wish was pious. The communists could not leave the Kuomintang, which was aiming at unification of the country, through the militarists.

The theses of the seventh plenum reached Shanghai while Roy was still on the way to China. Ts'ai Ho-sen later wrote that when the theses were received in China it became clear that there were important differences between the Comintern and the CCP leadership According to Ts'ai Ho-sen, the Comintern had asked the Chinese communists to "make a choice between the bourgeoisie and the peasantry, and to select the latter", but the members of the Central Committee of the CCP had allied themselves with the Rightists who had already supported Chiang Kai-shek or later went over to him.

During the discussions in the Central Committee, and that was before Roy's arrival, it became increasingly evident that some of the Chinese communists were troubled by the Theses and were extremely hesitant about unleashing a large scale agrarian revolution.

Even after the masses through spontaneous action had occupied Hankow and forced a British withdrawal, the Central Committee of the CCP had in its political report of January 8, 1927 declared that a reconciliation between Chiang Kai-shek and Wang Ching-wei was "the most important of all problems", and a slogan of 'Reduce the People's hurdens' would be inappropriate while military action—the Northern Expedition—was in progress.

On January 26, the Central Committee asked communists to allay the Kuomintang fear of the Chinese Communist Party, which they attributed to the success of the Northern expedition mainly fought by the Communist Iron Army.

On February 27, soon after Roy's arrival in Canton—Roy arrived in Canton on February 12—the Chinese Communist Party issued a warning—presumably inspired and written by Roy—that "under no circumstances can the military or other organs of the revolutionary state be permitted to act independently". On March 9, Roy warned the party that the danger of the revolution being betrayed through compromises with militarism and imperialism was real. His criticism of Chiang Kai-shek delaying his entry into Shanghai, while workers were being massacred by the imperialists even after they had struck to facilitate Chiang's victory, was refused publication by the Canton communists.

The warning was issued from Canton in which Roy asserted that the country had a right to know why Chiang Kai-shek "allowed the imperialist henchmen to stage a blood bath of the leaders of the Shanghai proletariat while his army stood right by the city".[23] The Chinese communists refused publication to the warning lest it provoke Li Chi-shen, the local Cantonese militarist, into taking repressive measures.[24] By the middle of March, the third Plenum of the Kuomintang resolved that nothing should be published in the papers of the Communist Party that violates the principle of cooperation with Kuomintang.

The pathetic subservience of the communists towards the rightist Chiang, who had launched a campaign against them, continued. Ch'en Tu-hsiu said: "Our duty is to persuade the nationalist revolutionary leader, General Chiang Kai-shek to prove in words and actions" that he is not anti-Red.[25] Naturally the Shanghai communists did not oppose Chiang's entry into their city. Within 17 days of his arrival in Shanghai, communists were rounded up and their labour pickets disarmed.

The second Northern expedition as a symbol of unification of the country, then became the main issue in communist circles. Roy opposed it while Borodin favoured it, and as Ts'ai Ho-sen observes the "misunderstandings ensued from different political viewpoints of these two men." Borodin wanted postponment of the agrarian revolution till Peking had been captured. Roy held that the agrarian revolution could not be delayed. Roy contended that the generals "with the help of whom we must reach Peking would in all probability turn into new Chiang Kai-sheks". In his view the "Chinese revolution will either win as an agrarian revolution or it will not win at all".[26]

When the Whampoa Military Academy had been set up, Chiang Kai-shek became its head with Chou En-lai as the political adviser. The Kuomintang and the communists were in alliance but both "were dependent upon a congeries of military men". The resentment that followed the May 30 shooting at workers at Shanghai created the impression of massive communist influence. In October 1925, the enlarged plenum of the CCP's central executive committee decided to "simultaneously build up a clandestine organization"—similar to what Roy had advocated for India—but no such organization was built up. The process was probably deferred by the results of the elections to the second central executive committee of the Kuomintang in January 1926. The extreme right wingers, who since 1924 had been objecting to communist influence, were defeated. Leftists, who favoured cooperation with the communists, scored a dramatic victory.

Yet, the Kuomintang was not split. A kind of tenous unity, or rather the semblance of it, was maintained, through the proposal for a Northern expedition against the warlord government in Peking—that of Chang Tso-lin and Wu P'ei-fu. The expedition was launched officially on July 9, 1926 but troops had been sent to Hunan as early as May, exposing Wuhan to threats from a local warlord.

Cooperation between Soviet Russia and the Kuomintang regime in Kwangtung in the extreme south, was not as easy as with Feng Yu-hsiang in the north-west whose territory adjoined Russia's. In February 1926 Borodin paid a visit to General Feng in Shensi. While Borodin was away from Canton, Chiang Kai-shek carried out his March 20 coup against his own government, and its communist supporters and Russian advisers.

Meanwhile the northern warlord Wu P'ei-fu (close to the Japanese imperialists) began preparations for a drive southward against the Kuomintang in Kwangtung to forestall the Northern expedition. Chiang Kai-shek hastily made up with Borodin but extracted a heavy price in the shape of restrictions on communist presence and activity within the Kuomintang. Borodin agreed, because to him, "Russian aid to Kuomintang appeared equivalent to supporting the Chinese revolution".

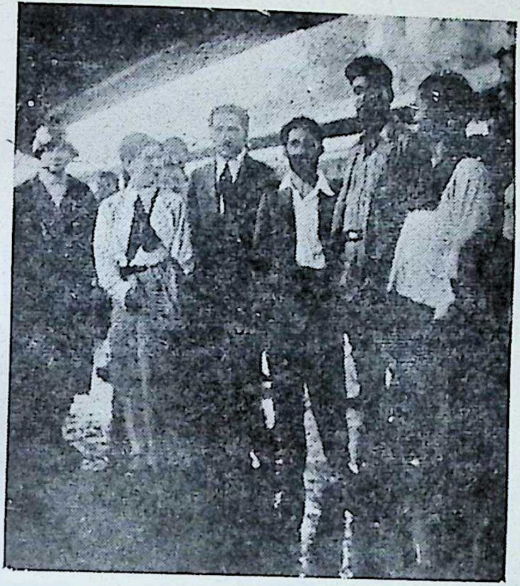
Wang Ching-wei left for Paris on May 9, 1926 and his departure weakened the communists. So an enlarged plenum of the CCP Executive in July (12-18, 1926) while recognizing Chiang Kai-shek's coup as an "anti-communist offensive" by the Kuomintang right wing reiterated communist "participation in directing the Kuomintang's work as pre-requisites to a victorious Chinese revolution". The plenum also decided to consolidate the Kuomintang left wing, but deferred till the Fifth Party Congress (scheduled for the Spring of 1927) the organization of "a complete peasant political platform" and this in the face of a directive from the Comintern as early as 1923 "to strive for confiscation of land" and "to broaden the base of the anti-imperialist revolution".

When Roy reached China, the Kuomintang was all but split but none would admit the fact. There were two capitals—Wuhan where the leftists, who had secured a majority the previous year, functioned looking to the returned Wang Ching-wei for providing them with a national figure and to T'ang Sheng-chih for armed protection, and Nanchang (Nanking) where Chiang Kai-shek ruled. The communists were closer to the left Kuomintang but had shelved the agrarian programme though the peasant organization which had helped the northern expedition had enlarged communist following many times. Ts'ai Ho-sen, a close friend of Mao Tse-tung, noted that "the Chinese revolutionary movement had reached on its own a stage when the peasants began to confiscate the land".[27]

In February, Mao Tse-tung submitted his report on the peasant movement in Hunan—one of the provinces traversed by the northern expedition. Mao said in the report that if ten points were to be allotted to the accomplishment of the democratic revolution, the achievements of the urban dwellers and the military units rate only three points, while the remaining seven points should go to the peasants in their rural revolution.[28] But when the Fifth Congress met (April 27—May 12, 1927) to discuss the agrarian situation (as was fixed earlier), Mao thought it more prudent to absent himself.[29]

At that Congress the question of agrarian reform came to a head. "The left Kuomintang government resisted any agrarian reform on the plea that the national revolution was not yet complete; social revolution must wait, (while) in the provinces occupied by Chiang Kai-shek's army, violent suppression of the peasant movement had already begun. The Hankow Government was also moving in that direction. Should the Communists still support it, or lead the agrarian revolution at the risk of breaking up the united front with the Kuomintang?"[30]

Roy moved a resolution to the effect that the communists must lead the agrarian revolution. Borodin and Chen Tu-hsiu, Chairman of the CCP, opposed it. Their thesis was that till



Loo Geissler, Gen, Galen and M. N. Roy on the eve of their departure from China at Hankow Railway Station.

Louise Geissler in, 1928
(Courtesy : Mrs. J Bhaduri)

M. N. Roy in Moscow, 1924

the nationalist army reached Peking, peace must be maintained at all cost in the territories occupied by the army. To support the demand of the peasantry meant precipitating a civil war, because the landowning class would oppose, and the officers of the nationalist army came from that class. The united national front will break up. The resolution, moved by Roy, was however passed by the Executive only after he threatened to place it before the open session; and it was passed in the open session by a big majority in spite of the opposition of Ch'en Tu-hsiu and the manipulations of Borodin because most of the delegates came from the countryside and knew the mood of the peasantry.[31] In Moscow Trotsky denounced Ch'en Tu-hsiu's policy of continued collaboration with the Right Kuomintang. The Chinese Communist Party placed the need for alliance (with KMT) above that of revolution, especially agrarian revolution".[32]

Later Mao came to a Politburo meeting, sometime in May where the rural delegates were in a minority and asked for the resolution to be kept in abeyance. "We must not develop social revolution in the villages and weaken the rear of the nationalist army" was the burden of his speech, and he left without allowing any discussoin.[33] That was the end of hopes raised by developments in 1925 and 1926. The heresy failed to achieve results because it was never given a trial, and every action taken in its pursuit was sabotaged.

Warlords began rebelling against the Wuhan within a week of the conclusion of the Fifth Congress of the CCP, and the despatch of the Second Northern expeditiou. One of the generals allied with the Wuhan government, the commander of the fourteenth Division, Hsia Tao-yin revolted on May 18. Three days later, General Hsu K'e-hsiang, stationed in Changsha, staged a coup. Since the units of the Iron army had been sent on the Second Northern Expedition no effective resistance could be offered. The rebel warlords transferred their allegiance from the left KMT to Chiang Kai-shek.

At the end of May, there was almost daily news of additional defections to Chiang. The united front was maintained.

The counter-attack on Changsha was called off. There were however consoling reports of victories in the North. Borodin, his CCP supporters and the KMT leaders in Wuhan vigorously opposed arming the workers from the Hanyang Arsenal. When on 18th of May the news came that Hsia was less than twenty miles from Wuhan, Roy urged that the workers be armed, that the guns being manufactured in Wuhan's Hanyang Arsenal be used to resist General Hsia. Borodin refused to arm the masses. "As he (Borodin) saw it", writes Borodin's biographer, Dan Jacobs, "arming the mobs might ultimately prevent the Sovetniki and the Chinese who had dedicated themselves to Borodin from getting out of China alive".[34] Besides, his wife Fanya was still in the prison of a northern warlord.

Eye-witnesses' account of the situation in Changsha give a completely different and realistic story. Tom Mann and Earl Browder, who had accompanied Roy as members of the Comintern delegation, visited Changsha in May and found it to have the "best organized" mass movement.[35]—"In April and May there was (in fact) a revolution afoot". Another independent observer, Vincent Sheean had recalled, "Hankow, then—to sum up—was marvellous revolutionary spectacle. . . . You could not be in Hankow a week without being aware of all this. French Communists, German Communists Hindoo Communists, British ILP people, and numerous agitators, responsible to the Komintern gave the place a fine mixed flavour of international revolt. The fact that many of these revolutionists preferred not to appear in public, and liked to conceal their comings and goings as much as possible, made the phenomena more significant. The beautiful carved-oak head of Manabendra Nath Roy, head of the Far Eastern section of the Komintern, could be seen across a restaurant table in effective contrast to the dishevelled pate of Jacques Doriot".[36]

But as the rings of defeat made narrower and narrower circles around Wuhan, Roy appealed to Stalin. He thought the revolution could only be saved if Wang could be assured of Comintern support. Roy believed that Wang stood ready to be rescued. In holding this belief he was probably influenced by

Madame Sun; but the fact remains, in the words of Ts'ai Ho-sen, a member of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party, who was killed by Chiang Kai-shek in 1927. "Wang Ching-wei became the center of our entire policy".[37] Wang Ching-wei, in fact, was the only major leader of left Kuomintang government, who was trying to maintain friendly relations with the CCP and even attended the Fifth Congress and later the Politburo sessions of the CCP.

On June 1, Borodin and Roy received a secret radio message from Stalin in reply to Roy's appeal, and the telegram was intended to assure the left KMT government of Moscow's support. It *inter-alia* read:

> "without an agrarian revolution victory is impossible ......We are decidedly in favour of the land actually being seized by the masses from below.....You must not sever yourselves from the worker and peasant movement, but must assist it in every way. Otherwise, you will ruin the cause."
>
> "Certainly old leaders of the Central Committee of the Kuomintang are afraid of what is taking place. They are vacillating and compromising. A large number of new peasant and working class leaders from the ranks must be drawn into the Central Committee of the Kuomintang. Their bold voice will stiffen the backs of the old leaders or throw them into the discard. The present structure of the Kuomintang must be changed. The leadership of the Kuomintang must be freshened and reinforced by new leaders who have come to the fore in the agrarian revolution....."
>
> "It is necessary to liquidate the dependence upon unreliable generals. Mobilize about 20,000 communists and about 50,000 revolutionary workers and peasants from Hunan and Hupeh, form several new army corps, utilize the students of the school for commanders, and organize your own reliable army before it is too late....."
>
> "Organize a revolutionary tribunal headed by prominent non-Communist Kuomintangists. Punish officers who main-

tain contact with Chiang Kai-shek.....The scoundrels must be punished. If the Kuomintangists do not learn to be revolutionary Jacobins, they will be lost both to the people and to the revolution".[38]

Chang Kuo-t'ao in the *Rise of the Chinese Communist Party* writes that when Stalin's message was read out to the Chinese Politburo no one knew whether to laugh or cry. They agreed that this "fairy tale from overseas" could not be carried out.[39] Roy however felt that Wang could be influenced to follow the mass revolutionary way if he could be assured that Moscow would back him up. He showed the telegram to Wang, besides Mme Sun and Eugene Chen. A French diplomat, then in China, defending Roy's action in showing the telegram to Wang commented that it "was to gamble on the revolutionary disposition of Wang Ching-wei and the Kuomintang left wing".[40]

Dan N. Jacobs, the American biographer of Borodin, has commented that "Roy had not upset Wang nearly so much as Stalin's message had—and that could not be recalled..Now and later Roy would be blamed, by some, for having undermined the United Front......That, of course was absurd ; the United Front was doomed long before Roy came along".[41]

Countrary to popular belief however Wang was not immediately affected by Stalin's telegram. He maintained his relations with the CCP and addressed the Fourth Congress of the All-China Labour Federation, which met in Wuhan from June 19 to 28, alongside Chinese Communist leaders and Roy, and which adopted an "uncompromisingly radical program".[42]

The Northern Expedition's victories were unreal. The Iron Army which bore the brunt of the fighting was decimated. There was a daily streak of wounded reaching Hankow. By June 1, the number of wounded there was 9000. The warlords had done no fighting and had kept their armies intact, and were in a position to bully the Wuhan Government and order it to do what they bade it to do.

Stalin's instructions were for action by the Left KMT Government for its own survival. They were not instructions for action by the CCP or by the two Communist Ministers in the Wuhan Government. So they had to be either communicated to the notables of that government or ignored.

There was no immediate reaction of the Wuhan Government to those instructions though the picture of consternation and alarm was subsequently built up. The government was not inclined to act on those instructions and preferred to take orders from Feng, who ultimately ordered Wuhan to make its peace with Nanking, and expel the Communists.

In late June and early July the Wuhan KMT—inclusive of Wang Ching-wei—continued to search for an alternative to abject surrender to Chiang Kai-shek. At Chengchow on June 10 the Wuhan leaders had thought of General Feng as their new protector because the "Christian General" thought of Wang Ching-wei and Madame Sun as a foil to Chiang. Subsequently on June 20 and 21, Feng and Chiang had a conference at which an agreement was reached for the immediate ouster of the Russians and the CCP.

The Wuhan need was for army, but it would not trust the masses with arms. Wang attended the Labour Federation Congress, but almost immediately it was over on June 28, the Wuhan Government disarmed the Workers' General Picket Corps which had seen that Wuhan was not overrun by General Hsia's troops. After the disarming of the Workers' Picket Corps the CCP fleetingly considered armed action ; but Borodin, thinking now of his return to Moscow, directed laying down of arms.

The rupture between the CCP and the left KMT took place on July 15, following news that Fanya has been released on July 12. Till June 23, Mme Sun and Eugene Chen, both of whom were aware of the contents of Stalin's telegram—according to Jacobs had been shown that by Roy himself– argued stubbornly at the CEC of the left KMT against tossing the CCP overboard.

On July 12, T. V. Soong, brother-in-law of both Sun Yat-sen and Chiang Kai-shek, returned to Wuhan from Shanghai having made his peace with Chiang. He held out hopes for a KMT reunion Plenum in August, at which time Chiang Kai-shek "might" resign, giving Wuhan an opportunity to determine China's future leadership. But, said Soong, the deal could be arranged only if Borodin and the CCP were physically expelled from Wuhan at once.[43]

Here was hope for Wang Ching-wei. Borodin and his travelling companions left Wuhan between July 13 and 16. Immediately afterwards, General Ho Chien's men, on advice that Borodin had gone, arrived at the deserted headquarters and opened fire. Martial law was declared. People identified with the Wuhan regime who had not already fled were arrested and many killed on the spot.

Borodin went to a hiding place called Lushan. Then he took up residence in Soong's house, and on July 23 his successor Besso Lominadze arrived in Wuhan from Moscow On July 27 Borodin boarded a special train. He was seen off by Wang Ching-wei and T. V. Soong. Roy left Hankow on August 8. After crossing the Gobi desert by car, he took the Trans-Siberian railway to Moscow.

Wang Ching-wei does not seem to have broken off from the CCP till the KMT accepted Chiang's terms and that was nearly 42 days after he had been shown Stalin's telegram The decisive fact for Wang was not the radical programme but the indecisiveness and inability of the CCP leadership to provide him with adequate backing against Chiang.

On the other hand, Mao had collaborated with Chiang Kai-shek's minority faction of Kuomintang longer than any other leading Chinese Communist. Later, when he switched over to Wang Ching-wei's Kuomintang he took over the responsibility for the propaganda department of the Kuomintang CEC in January 1926.[44]

Mao's own career was linked with the Kuomintang, or that is what he thought till 1926. He threw himself into the task of organising communist cooperation with the Kuomintang so enthusiastically that he was soon looked upon with suspicion in his own party. Mao's biographer, Stuart Schram notes that in the triangular relationship of Moscow, the Kuomintang and the CCP, "the position of Mao Tse-tung during the crucial years

1925-1927 was on the whole closer to that of Borodin and Chen Tu-hsiu, the leader of the CCP".[45] He supported Chiang Kai shek's plan for unification of the country because national unity was a matter of vital importance to him.

After the counter-revolution, Madame Sun abandoned Hankow and fled to Shanghai, stating that the name of Dr. Sun could no longer be used to sanction a programme which suppressed workers, peasants and communists. "It was no longer the Hunan Generals who were loyal to the Kuomintang and to Wuhan; it was the Wuhan Government that was loyal to the Hunan generals".[46]

It was at this juncture that Madame Sun had suggested that the civilian government of Wuhan lead the revolutionary forces south to Canton to entrench themselves in the historic base of revolution. This was what Roy too had suggested.

On Roy's testimony in *Men I Met,* written two decades later, there was only one meeting between him and Mao—at the Politburo session at which Mao declared that outsiders did not understand China,[47] which was true to the extent that Roy did not quite assess the latent nationalism among communists in colonial countries. But the fact also remains that Mao was not prepared to accept Roy's leadership.

That Mao considered himself and the Chinese nation as superior to India and other nations and leaders of Asia and therefore could not accept an Indian M N. Roy's leadership is borne out by the events immediately after Roy had left China, and another Comintern representative, Lominadze arrived. The Nanchang uprising, the anniversary of which is celebrated in China as the 'Red Army Day', took place in August under Mao's leadership, soon after Lominadze arrived. It was an action more extremist and "adventurist" than the one advocated by Roy at the Fifth Congress, and led to a disaster.

At that time, on August 20, 1927, Mao wrote to the central committee of the CCP, "China has long since reached 1917" and he "jumped for joy" hearing that a new comrade from the International proposes "the immediate establishment of Soviets of workers, peasants and soldiers in China".[48]

It would be natural for a nationalist Chinese—and we have enough evidence of Mao being a nationalist—to think of Indians as an inferior people. India had been conquered and ruled by the British whereas Chinese military defeats had only resulted in Unequal Treaties, transfer of small enclaves to foreign rule and economic domination.

Mao's opposition at the CCP's Fifth Congress to Roy's programmte for an agrarian revolution might also have been influenced to a degree by his ambition to get the leadership of the CCP, which meant eliminating Borodin, Roy and Chen Tu-hsiu. By August 1927 all the three were out of his way; the counter-revolution had driven Borodin and Roy out of China and Chen Tu-hsiu had been dropped from his prolonged Chairmanship of the CCP.

Nine years later, Mao had to talk about these three when he told Edgar Snow of the 1927 events: "Objectively, Roy had been a fool, Borodin a blunderer and Chen Tu-siu an unconscious traitor". Mao added: "After Chen, the man most responsible for the defeat was Borodin. . . . .Borodin had completely reversed his position, favouring a radical land distribution in 1926, but strongly opposing it in 1927, without any logical support for his vacillations. Borodin stood just a little to the right of Chen Tu-hsiu and was ready to do everything to please the bourgeoisie, even to the disarming of workers, which he finally ordered. Roy, the Indian delegate of the Comintern, stood to the left of both Chen and Borodin, but he only stood. He could talk. . .and he talked too much, without offering any method of realization".[49]

But during Roy's 160 days in China the effective policies followed by Mao did not differ from those of either Borodin or Chen Tu-hsiu to Roy's bewilderment. Yet while talking about India to Snow, Mao said the country could not be free "without an agrarian revolution".[50] Well, Roy thought the same about China.

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2. Robert C. North and Xenia J. Eudin—*M. N. Roy's Mission to China;* University of California Press, 1963; p. 19

3. M. N. Roy, Op. Cit., p. 20; Even in January 1925 "by its own reckoning, it (the CCP) had only one thousand members" (Dan Jacobs, *Borodin;* p. 147)

4. Stuart Schram—*Mao Tse-tung;* Pelican, 1966; p. 74

5. Ibid, p. 74

6. M. N. Roy, Op. Cit., p. 46

7. North and Eudin, Op. Cit., pp. 20-21

8. M. N. Roy—*Revolution and Counter-Revolution in China,* Calcutta, 1946; p. 386

9. Stuart Schram, Op. Cit., p. 84; Also, Dan Jacobs, *Borodin;* Harvard University Press, 1981; p. 184

10. North and Eudin, Op. Cit., p. 21; also, Dan Jacobs, *Borodin;* p. 190

(In the new Central Executive Committee of the Kuomintang, 7 of the 36 members belonged to the CCP and 14 to the left KMT).

11. M. N. Roy—*Revolution and Counter-Revolution in China,* p. 398

12. North and Eudin, Op. Cit., p. 29: "Wang's recall", write North and Eudin, "was prerequisite to Communist plans for strengthening the left wing of the Kuomintang against Chiang Kai-shek".

13. Dan Jacobs, Op. Cit., pp. 239-40; Also Jacques Guillermaz —*A History of the Chinese Communist Party,* 1921-1949; English edition, Methuen & Company, Ltd., London, 1972: "At the third session of the second CEC of the (left) Kuomintang and its Communist allies passed several resolutions showing their mistrust of the Commander-in-Chief (Chiang)......Chiang was dismissed from the post of the Chairman of the Political Council......A bureau with seven members was created to replace the post of Chairman; it included Wang Ching-wei, Sun Fo, T. V. Soong and T'ang Ping-chan" (p. 117) among others.

14. Franz Borkenau—*World Communism;* Ann Arbor Paperbacks, USA, 1962; p. 288

15. M. N. Roy on "Malenkov" in *Men I Met,* Lalvani Publishers, Bombay 1968; p. 91

16. North and Eudin write: "The precise reasons for his journey have never been clear, but his own subsequent testimony suggests that a growing conflict between Chiang Kai-shek and the Chinese Communist Party lay at the heart of the matter (Op. Cit., p. 43)

17. In February 1926 Roy was appointed to the editorial staff of

the *Communist International*, the multi-language journal of the Comintern. At the time of the Sixth Plenum (Feb-March 1926) he was elected to the Presidium and named Chairman of the Eastern Commission and was also elected member of the ECCI Orgburo and the Secretariat. Following the Seventh Plenum (Nov-Dec. 1926) he was elected to the British and Agrarian Commissions and a joint Secretary of the Chinese Commission. Thus, by the end of 1926, Roy had attained membership on all four of the official policy-making bodies of the Comintern : the Presidium, the Political Secretariat, the ECCI and the World Congress.

18. Stalin, Concerning Questions of the Chinese Revolution ; *Works* IX, p. 238 ; also quoted in North and Eudin, Op. Cit., p. 84

19. Ibid, pp. 265-66

20. The full text of Roy's speech at the Fifth Congress of the CCP has been carried in North and Eudin, Op. Cit., pp. 188-208 under caption "The Problems of the Chinese Revolution and the Role of the Proletariat".

"For the first time", wrote Pavel Mif, who was present at the Congress "the Chinese Communist Party was given a truly Leninist prognosis of the events which were taking place.........Roy gave the young Chinese Party the experience of world Bolshevism", quoted in Roy, "Revolution and Counter-Revolution in China", p. 538 footnote and in North and Eudin, Op. Cit., pp. 78-79.

(Mif was a worker in the Eastern Department of the Comintern. In the beginning of 1926 he was sent to China for organizing party schools. Later, in 1930, Mif became the representative of the Communist International in China. The quotation is from a book, Mif wrote in 1932, three years after Roy had formally ceased to be a member of the Comintern).

Dan Jacobs writes : "Moscow's director of scenario for what happened in China was a young Ukrainian, Mikhail Alexandrvich Fortus, known in party circles as Pavel Mif. In the mid-20s, Mif had been sent by Stalin to keep an eye on Karl Radek, the rector at Sun Yat-sen Universitp. Mif trained himself to become a China specialist, authored a number of anti-Trotsky books and articles on China, and,......was sent there by the Central Committee of the Russian party. Back in Moscow, after the fall of Wuhan, he succeeded the ousted Radek as head of Sun Yat-sen University and became Stalin's principal spokesman on China at the fifteenth Party Congress in December 1927" (*Borodin*, Op. Cit., p. 306).

21. M. N. Roy—*Revolution and Counter-Revolution in China*, Op. Cit., p. 550

22. North and Eudin, Op. Cit., p. 36

23. Ibid, p. 52

24. Ibid, p. 52

25. Ibid, p. 55

26. Ibid, p. 62

27. Ibid, p. 42 (Ts'ai Ho-sen, who was a member of the central committee of the CCP was killed by Chiang in 1927)

28. Ibid, p. 50

29. Stuart Schram, Op. Cit., p. 110

30. M. N. Roy on "Mao Tse-tung" in *Men I Met,* Op. Cit., p. 126

31. Ibid, p. 128; Dan Jacobs however writes: "Towards the end of the Congress, Roy saw he was losing out and wired Moscow seeking confirmation of his position that the revolution should be 'deepend', as opposed to the 'widening' that Borodin advocated. Stalin, who had been shaken by the news of Chiang's coup in Shanghai, wired back with decisive indecisiveness in favor of both deepening and widening. And the final draft of theses did call for both" (Op. Cit., p. 254)

32. Jacqnes Guillermaz Op. Cit., p. 134

33. M. N. Roy on "Mao Tse-tung", Op Cit., p. 128

34. Dan Jacobs, Op. Cit., p. 264

35. Tom Mann—*What I saw in China,* London, 1927; p. 24

36. Vincent Sheean—*Personal History,* The Modern Library, New York, 1940; p. 250 & 236

37. North and Eudin. Op. Cit., p. 111; M. N. Roy, writes: "He (Wang) agreed with the plan provided that the necessary help would be forthcoming" (*Revolution and Counter-Revolution in China,* Op. Cit., p. 520 f.n.)

38. North and Eudin, Op. Cit., pp. 106-7

39. Dan Jacobs, Op. Cit., p. 269

40. Jacques Guillermaz, Op. Cit., p. 142. Stuart Schram writes: "Roy's action may have hastened by a week or two the rupture between the Communists and Wuhan, which finally occurred on 15 July, but the rupture was inevitable in any case' (Op. Cit., p. 115)

41. Dan Jacobs, Op. Cit., p. 271

42. Ibid, p. 282

43. Ibid, p. 283

44. Stuart Schram. Op. Cit., p. 83

45. Ibid, p. 80

46. Anna Louise Strong—*China's Millions,* Victor Gollancz Ltd, 1936; p. 203

47. Roy on "Mao Tse-tung", Op. Cit., p. 128

48. Stuart Schram, Op. Cit., p. 120

49. Edgar Snow—*Red Star Over China,* p. 161

50. **Ibid, p. 85**

IX. The Second Heresy

SIX YEARS AFTER THE SECOND CONGRESS THERE WAS A fresh opportunity for the assessment of developments in the colonies and for rethinking Comintern attitudes. At the seventh plenum (November 30, 1926) Roy maintained that the days of "classic imperialism" were over. In China he said the policy of imperialism was to find a possible modus vivendi with a section of the Chinese bourgeoisie. Therefore he argued that the big bourgeoisie could not be counted upon as participants in a united anti-imperialist front, for he expected them to side with the imperialist against the revolution.

Great Britain, he contended, being unable to export capital was compelled to mobilize in India "inner capital resources" and encourage industrialization to postpone the collapse of the British capitalist system and with it the British empire. In India as well as in the Dominions, he argued, Great Britain could not hope to maintain political control in the face of declining export capital.

On his return from China where the bourgeoisie had struck against the communists, Roy was asked to draft a resolution on the perspective in India developing out of diminishing export of British capital. He saw in the process the inevitability of Britain allowing India to march from the state of dependency towards that of a Dominion. In the draft resolution Roy said :

"The Indian bourgeoisie, instead of being kept down as a potential rival, will be granted partnership in the economic development of the country under the hegemony of imperialism".[1]

The new policy did not amount as much to a transplantation to India of European capitalism as the encouragement of native capitalism, in order to expand the Indian market for British goods. He also noted that both in supply of goods and capital, countries other than Britain, were finding openings in India. These changes were materially altering the power structure, and called for a definite Comintern policy.

The Decolonization Theory, as his 1927 formulation came to be called in communist polemics, was at variance in several ways from the *Gale* article or the Second Congress Theses. The circumstances had changed. World War I had shaken the British economy, a fact which became noticeable only after 1927; but one thing had remained constant, the European proletariat had not made any revolutionary bid for power, and the slow rise of the socialists to power occurred along with the colonies becoming less paying.

Roy was decried as a lackey of British imperialism and its apologist through a misinterpretation of his 1927 formulation. But, he did not recant and went on in 1943 to argue that India having become Britain's creditor could no longer be held in subjection.[2] It became free four years later but not under a revolutionary leadership. Therefore even such a petty bourgeois reform as land distribution, which Roy in 1920 had described as a first step towards democratization, has not occurred yet.

At the Sixth Congress of the Communist International (1928), which M. N. Roy could not attend, he was accused by Kuusinen of having fathered a theory of "decolonization" which would gradually lead the Indian people to freedom.

Soon after the Congress and years later, the first time in an article, and the second time in a pamphlet, Roy denied having ever suggested that the process of industrialization automatically would bestow freedom on the country, or in any way diminish the need for revolutionary action or for a revolutionary party.

As he said "the unfortunate term (decolonization) has a little history. While I was away in China (1927) a new comrade from India (Saumyen Tagore) came to Moscow. In his report he emphasized on the rapid development in India...... In summarizing the debate on the report of the Indian delegate, Bukharin suggested that the Commission set up for examining the question should report on the process of such 'decolonisation'."[3]

According to Roy, on his return from China he was charged to draft a resolution on the basis of the preparatory work accomplished by the Commission. The resolution was never adopted, probably as Roy says, because of waning of interest in the subject. Nor was it ever published and so the controversy in regard to it had been based on assumptions and presumptions.

But since the term "decolonization" implies the recognition of an economic phenomenon, analogous to those which are the subject of scientific laws, it would be useful to recall that the term was not Roy's, but Bukharin's, and that Bukharin (not Roy) was the Comintern's theoretician. Roy concedes that Bukharin used the term "evidently in a tentative and relative sense",[4] and not in the absolute sense alleged by its critics. The fact remains that the use was Bukharin's.

Yet when Bukharin as Chairman of the Communist International opened the Sixth Congress debate on the draft Programme of the International he made a personal disclaimer. He said: "I do not share the viewpoint of those who claim that India had ceased to be a colonial country, and that we are witnessing a process of decolonization".[5]

The resolution drafted by Roy in October 1927 was not under discussion. In fact it was never discussed at all. What was under discussion at the Sixth Congress was a programme drafted in May 1928 with which Roy was not associated in any way since he had left for Berlin in April of that year and was lying ill in the German capital. Bukharin however felt the need for dissociating himself from decolonization, and this must have arisen from being vulnerable on that score in his conflict with Stalin. Theoreticians in a party of action are more vulnerable than activists in power, who can use power to conceal errors. Stalin had prevented being assailed for failure of his China policy.

Roy was the person who could point out the lapses of Stalin's policy because Roy had been in China and had been overridden. Both Stalin and Roy had avoided bickerings. Stalin refrained from blaming Roy, and the latter in turn had defended Stalin's stand on China. Bukharin was in an uneasy situation having helped Roy to leave Moscow for treatment in Berlin in the absence of Stalin,[6] while Stalin's attitude towards Roy was still unknown.

Bukharin was involved in 1928 in a struggle for power with Stalin. He had joined Stalin against Zinoviev, who was ousted from the Chairmanship of the International after nearly seven years in office (1920-1926), and against Trotsky, who was removed from the International's Executive in 1927. That was the year Bukharin became the Chairman, a position he was to retain for only two years.

In 1928 he was facing opposition from Stalin. Two American communists Manuel Gomez and Jay Lovestone, both of whom attended the Sixth Congress, and were then engaged in a bitter factional squabble between themselves, are on record separately about the power struggle dominating the session. Lovestone, who in 1928 was on the side of Bukharin, went so far as to describe a parallel "Corridor Congress" going on. The business at the parallel session was walking up and down the corridors with Stalin's people, talking in favour of Bukharin, and winning people over. Gomez was on the side of Stalin and did the same.[7]

Why did Bukharin feel weak? In 1924 he had endorsed the economist Varga's criticism of the German Party's opposition to the "rationalization" of industry in Germany with American finance. German communists' opposition to rationalization was on the ground of its causing unemployment. But the Russian policy was to buttress Germany against Western imperialism. Varga criticized the German party's attitude as analogous to that of the "machine-breakers" early in the industrial revolution.

There was much in common between the German rationalization with American finance and industrialization of India with British capital. In either case the means of production were being developed through technological advancement. In 1927 Varga welcomed Roy's decolonization thesis, and described it as a "geometrically beautiful structure. . .written from a truly Marxist point of view".[8] Roy thought Varga praised the thesis because Bukharin, the Chairman, had approved of it, but a year later, when Bukharin was in disgrace the piece was condemned by Varga as an "illusion about the emancipating role of imperialism".[9]

Evaluation of ideas follows a tortuous course in a system in which ideology and power are wedded. Bukharin's differences with Stalin began soon after the former's elevation to the office of Chairman of the International. Bukharin opposed Stalin's first Five-Year Plan as a step towards militarization. Stalin had become the leader of the party, and so Varga condemned Bukharin for desiring Soviet Russia to be a petit-bourgeois peasant economy.

That was not enough. Varga found that about two years earlier Bukharin had speculated on the capacity of capitalism overcoming its cycle of crises through super-imperialism. Faith in history being on the side of communists is sustained through an intellectual reasoning that capitalism cannot overcome its inner contradictions, and therefore it is bound to provide opportunities for proletarian revolution.

Varga had to change his opinion between October 1927 and February 1928 about another economic theory associated with Bukharin. He argued that Britain had halted its policy of industrializing India, which had been a temporary war-time expedient, and resumed its traditional policy of treating India as a source of agricultural raw materials and a market for British manufactures. Indian and British members of the Indian Commission disputed Varga's conclusions, and contended that they were misinterpretations of facts.[10]

The official position seems to have been determined before the Sixth Congress opened, and that was to put Bukharin on the defensive. As Overstreet and Windmiller correctly put it: "The Russians were clearly bent on making 'decolonization' an odious word. To do this, they ascribed to it a meaning which Roy certainly never intended, namely, the voluntary cessation of imperialist exploitation".[11] The Russians found a convenient ally in Shaukat Usmani, who had gone from India, after a quarrel with Benjamin Bradley (a British communist deputed to India) over party work, and in the face of a refusal of a mandate from the Communist Party of India[12] for which he was expelled from the party after his return.[13]

He attacked the British comrades, at one point accusing them of 'open defence of imperialism'. The attack succeeded and the British delegation accepted the spurious Russian definition of decolonization and denounced it. He was supported by two other Indians, Raza (Masood Ali Shah) and Mazut (Mahmud, according to Usmani, being the cloak name of Habib Ahmad Nasim). Both, according to Usmani, were later shot in Moscow as British agents.[14] But even so the British delegate, Bennet (really a Russian whose name was Petrovsky and was resident in Britain as the International's agent) sarcastically interrupted Nasim: "The industry does not develop but the proletariat grows?"[15]

The only person to question the Russian interpretation of the term 'decolonization' was G. A. K. Luhani, an Indian close to Roy and associated with the Commission which drafted the resolution on the basis of Saumyen Tagore's report. He emphasized that "our use of the term was provisional; we always put the term in quotation marks. I repudiate entirely the interpretation Comrade Kuusinen has given". He also said the term 'decolonization' was included in "what I might call the terms of reference of the commission". During the several discussions held he could recall "no serious divergence of opinion inside the Commission". He described the discussion in the

Congres as "one-sided", and that the point of view had been presented to the Congress "not in its original but travestied form". And he went on to register his "energetic protest against this method of controversy as, to put it mildly, unfair both to the delegates of the Congress and those whose point of view is being criticised".[16]

In most discussions of the decolonization thesis the issue is mixed up with the line of party action later followed in India and the debate thereupon. This has happened because the thesis itself was not presented to the Congress. Instead Kuusinen's Theses on the Revolutionary Movement in the Colonies and Semi-Colonies was put for debate and used as an opportunity for attacks on decolonization and Roy. The two need to be separate, and here we shall confine ourselves to 'docolonization'.

Soon after Bukharin spoke at the Sixth Congress dissociating himself from the Decolonization Thesis, Bunting from South Africa protested against the mention of the "proletariat of the Capitalist countries, and the 'masses' of the colonies.....Our workers are not simply 'masses'; they are preletarians as authentic as proletarians elsewhere in the world......Is not this distinction between European 'proletariat' and colonial 'masses' of the same order as the treatment meted out to the black workers by 'our labour aristocracy'."[17]

The germ of the idea of decolonization was present with Roy as early as 1920 because the last paragraph of his original draft of the supplementary thesis at the Second Congress envisaged the possibility of European capitalism transplanted in Asia. In the adopted text, the urgency of the formation of Communist Parties in the colonies derived from the need to enable the masses to reach communism, not through capitalist development, but led by the class-conscious proletariat of the advanced capitalist countries, was inserted into Roy's draft to accommodate the belief at the International that the 'masses' of India were incapable of 'proletarian' action. That the belief persisted until the Sixth Congress is borne out by Bunting's protest quoted above.

Roy had to labour against this reservation right through his Comintern years. Sneevliet's testimony in 1920 of the existence of a proletariat in Java did not convince the International. Serrati voiced the feeling of many others when he warned against class collaboration in the backward countries, "for in those countries the proletariat does not yet have a firm class consciousness, and blindly follows its leaders".[18]

At the Fourth Congress (1922) Roy had to warn the International against a simple division of the world between advanced and backward countries. He objected to all colonial countries being lumped together, and classified them in three categories. One of the categories included India and China, countries "in which capitalism has reached a farily high level of development. There, not only has the import of capital from the great capitalist countries resulted in the development of industry, but indigenous capitalism has come to maturity, thus favouring the appearance of a bourgeoisie endowed with well-developed class consciousness, and of its counterpart a proletariat, which also develops its class consciousness and finds itself engaged in economic struggle which gradually pass over to the political".[19]

In such countries, Roy argued, the bourgeoisie "finds it more advantageous to take the advantage of the protection of imperialism....a compromise with imperialist domination becomes more acceptable to the indigenous bourgeoisie". And then he proceeded to say that European capitalism hoped to find new markets in these countries by furthering their industrialization.

The Economics of Compromise, as he called them, were set down by Roy in his 1926 book, *The Future of Indian Politics,* which largely anticipated the decolonization thesis but did not reach the same startling conclusion of a gradual evolution to Dominion Status.

A recapitulation of the developments which led Roy to the conclusion that the Indian bourgeoisie and British capitalism would resolve their antagonism is necessary. Since 1916 a series of measures had conceded to a great extent the Indian nationalist demand for fiscal autonomy, including tariff protection for home industries; but, since fiscal autonomy could not be even partially asserted without political autonomy the 1919 Reforms had followed. Within four years of the Reforms an Indian Tariff Board was set up for the first time.

Roy did not think the Reforms had been forced by the Indian bourgeoisie's demands alone—other contributory factors were the exigencies of war, the necessity for widening the social basis of imperialism, the crisis of British imperialism caused by the war, competition from other manufacturing countries in the Indian market and the need to raise consumption levels in India so that it could buy more from Britain.

In 1927 Roy contended that the implication of the new British policy was that "India will be allowed eventually to evolve out of the state of dependency to Dominion Status. The Indian bourgeoisie, instead of being kept down as a potential rival, will be granted partnership......under the hegemony of Imperialist finance".[20]

The conclusions no longer seem startling, not only because they have actually happened, but because enlightened opinion no longer considers national freedom to be as revolutionary an objective as it seemed to the members of the Comintern in the 1920s. Further, the Comintern members were horrified at the idea of any gradual change, because they associated reliance on gradual change with Bernstein's reformism.

But in his decolonization thesis Roy was not advocating reliance on gradual change. On the contrary, he was arguing that since the bourgeoisie were entering into a compromise with imperialism, the Comintern could no longer ask the Communist Party of India to collaborate with the national bourgeois movement. The time had come for revolutionary action. As Roy was to put later: "The march of India from state of dependency towards that of a Dominion is a fact. How long the march will last is a different question".[21]

The duration of the march could be reduced by revolutionary action. The Comintern shirked action in 1928. World War II hastened the march but not through any revolutionary action by the Comintern, which was wound up as an organization in 1943, or either by the Communist parties of Great Britain or India.

Roy later had to say, of course without reference to either the Comintern or to his decolonization thesis, that a revolution cannot be created out of a non-existent situation but could be only brought about by the identification of favourable processes. The favourable processes in India included industrialization through the export of British capital and capital goods —the process of decolonization.

There was no other issue on which Roy was as bitterly criticised, or as vulgarily vilified--Kuusinen called him a "lackey of imperialism"—than as the author of the decolonization theory, but it was a major creative contribution to Marxist thought envisaging a stage in which imperialism may seek to free itself of its territorial burdens. It was on par with Marx identifying that increasing socialization of production under capitalism contained the seed of a change to social ownership of the means of production.

Roy and a British Communist, Hugh Rathbone, in 1928 were working on a book in Berlin titled tentatively "The Decline and Fall of the British Empire" which would have been a complete and full exposition of the decolonization thesis had it been published. The materials for the book were burnt in a fascist raid on a communist publishing firm, Malek Verlag, where the manuscript was deposited when Roy left for India.

In *Our Differences,* Roy referred to the resolution on the Indian question which he had drafted for Sixth Congress of the Comintern and a subsequent communication he sent to the Comintern answering Kuusinen's accusations. The draft resolution contained the decolonization theory and the subsequent communication its defence. Both documents remained unpublished till 1982 when Volume III-C 1928 of the *Documents of the History of the Communist Party of India* appeared.

It is difficult to assess whether the suppression of the documents for such a long period was accidental—the CPI was an illegal party till 1943—or deliberate. However is was unfair to

Roy because until his death in 1954 he was accused by the CPI of being a "renegade" to the revolutionary cause and a believer in Britain confering dominon status on India as a gift. The criticism continued even after India became a dominion in 1947, and later decided to be a Republic, but continuing membership of the Commonwealth which replaced the Empire.

The details of Roy's draft, its criticism by Kuusinen and Roy's rejoinder are no longer of much interest and are not being quoted here. Roy himself in 1938 did not think extensive quotations worthwhile; besides, he did not have the drafts with him. But the events of 1927, 1928 and 1929 are of great biographical value. While Roy was being attacked a British statutory Commission was considering grant of further autonomy to the Indian bourgeoisie ahead of schedule, and on 31st October 1929 announced 'Dominion Status' as the "natural issue" of India's Constitutional progress.[22]

The failure of the Chinese Communist Party to mobilize the peasantry and its excessive reliance on the leadership of the national bourgeoisie did contribute to Roy's draft in the following year on the Indian question. The politics of compromise was evident in Chiang Kai-shek's attack on the communists and suggested the possibility of decolonization which in China was prevented from fulfilment by Japanese militarism.

Roy resented the withdrawal of the CPI from the India Independence League in 1928 just a year after the Brussels conference of the League Against Imperialism, which had been organized by the Communists. The India Independence League was affiliated with the League Against Imperialism, and one of its leaders, Jawaharlal Nehru, had been an important figure at Brussels. The withdrawal was at the behest of the Comintern after its Sixth Congress.

In Germany at that time, Fascism was rearing its head, and German communist leaders like Heinrich Brandler and August Thalheimer wanted to join hands with the German Social Democrats to oppose it. They were overruled by the Comintern which was vague about the threat the Nazis constituted and also regarded it as a necessary transient phase.

The Sixth Congress frowned upon any collaboration with the Social Democrats, even against the Nazis. Roy expressed himself strongly in favour of such joint action, and the only Communist organs open to him were those of what the Comintern chose to brand as the Brandlerite Opposition.

Roy was not yet in the opposition to the Comintern leadership. He had not—and never did—blame Stalin for the ambiguous directives from Moscow on the handling of the Chinese situation. He maintained that the decolonization thesis[23] was the result of directives of the leadership. Even his rejoinder was polite enough to ascribe the Sixth Congress (July-September 1928) criticism to "misunderstanding".

The tone of the article in the Brandlerite Journal, *Gegen den Strom* (September 1929), was not in dissonance with the reojinder. Yet, the same month Roy was expelled from the Comintern, though the announcement appeared only in December that year.

Prof. John Haithcox contends that Roy's views had coincided with those of Bukharin throughout the 1920s and the two represented for a brief period in 1926-27 the dominant viewpoint in the Comintern when Stalin adopted a middle position. When Stalin veered to the left in 1927 to defend himself against Trotsky's attacks these two began to lose their importance.[24]

In 1929 there were expulsions from all parties affiliated to the Comintern. Jay Lovestone and his group, which had won 90% of the contests in the American party elections in March, were expelled by the end of June. The Brandler group in Germany had been expelled a year earlier. In November 1929 Harry Pollitt and Rajani Palme-Dutt replaced veterans like Tom Bell and Andrew Rothstein.

Between his expulsion from the Comintern in December 1929 and his departure for India in November 1930, Roy stayed in Berlin under his assumed Mexican name Roberto Alleny Villa Garcia, the same name which he had adopted to travel to Europe ten years earlier. His residence was the flat of Willi Munzenburg, the organizer of the League Against Imperialism. He engaged himself in writing *Revolution and Counter-Revolu-*

tion in China (in German) which was published in Germany soon after his departure in 1930.

Most of the communists outside Russia who had been expelled or replaced in their offices were friends of Bukharin and constituted a kind of International Communist Opposition. This opposition group withered away after Bukharin's arrest in 1937 in the Moscow trials. Roy continued to write for the journals of this opposition till 1937 in spite of being confined in an Indian jail for the most of the 1931-37 period.

He insisted, however, that the opposition should not convert itself into a rival international organization. In his letters from prison, he told Ellen Gottschalk, that no new 'shop' should be set up—'shop' being the code for organization. He did not want to emulate Trotsky, who after expulsion had formed the Fourth International.

The colonial question on which Roy held strong views determined to a great extent the policy of the Comintern and its directives to its affiliates. Between 1920 and 1927 the emphasis was on cooperating with the national bourgeoisie without surrendering the Communist identity—the colonial countries gaining in importance after the hope of a revolution in Germany proved abortive in 1923. Between 1928 and 1935 the Communist Parties became completely sectarian and boycotted all other groups including the Social Democrats in Europe. From 1935 there was a shift in policy toward the establishment of popular fronts brought about by the spectre of rising fascism as well as formation of the Fourth International by Trotsky.

The outbreak of World War II in 1939 ended the popular front phase. Nazi Germany's attack on Soviet Russia in June 1941 forced the latter to seek the help of countries like Britain and the USA and to pay for such cooperation through dissolution of the Comintern. Though reluctant and confused at first, Communist Parties collaborated with democratic and social democratic parties and governments.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. *Documents of the History of the Communist Party of India,* Vol. III-C 1928, edited by G. Adhikari; People's Publishing House, New Delhi, December 1982; p. 576

2. Towards the end of 1943 Britain was indebted to India to the tune of Rs. 1000 crores (1 crore equals 10 million). This had completely reversed the financial relationship between the two countries, because India had in the past been a debtor dependency, even after sale during the economic depression (1929-31) of considerable British-owned assets to Indians.

3. M. N. Roy—*Our Differences,* Calcutta 1938; pp. 29-30

4. Ibid, p. 30

5. Helene Carrere d'Encausse and Stuart R. Schram—*Marxism and Asia;* Allen Lane The Penguin Press; 1969; p. 233

6. John P. Haithcox, *Nationalism and Communism in India: M. N. Roy and Comintern Policy,* 1920-1939; Princeton University Press, USA; 1971; pp. 86-87.

However, Lousie Geissler's sister, Eva Walters, who claimed to be the liaison between the German delegation and Comintern headquarters since 1922, gave me a different account of M. N. Roy's escape from Moscow to Berlin, when I met her in Zurich in October 1983. According to her she arranged with the German airline, Duruluft which flew regularly from Moscow to Berlin, to fly Roy out of Moscow. There were, she said, in all three persons in the plane besides herself, Roy, Loo and the German pilot with whom she was friendly. She added that Roy had no papers with him, nor any exit permit.

7. Manuel Gomez, From Mexico to Moscow, II, in *Survey: A Journal of Soviet and East European Studies,* London; April 1965; No. 55; pp. 119-122

8. Inprecor, Vol. VIII; No. 45

9. M. N. Roy on "Eugene Varga" in *Men I Met;* Lalvani Publishing House, Bombay, 1968; p. 88

10. Inprecor, VIII, (1928); 1323-24

11. Gene Overstreet and Marshall Windmiller, *Communism in India;* University of California Press; 1959; p. 118

12. Muzaffar Ahmad, *Myself and the Communist Party of India,* National Book Agency, Calcutta, 1970; p. 450. Also,

Haithcox, Op. Cit., p. 128; Tagore—*Historical Development of C.P.I.* pp. 13-14 and Philip Spratt, *Blowing up India,* Calcutta, p. 41

13. Philip Spratt, Op. Cit., p. 42; Also Haithcox, Op. Cit., p. 128 and Muzaffar Ahmad, Op. Cit., p. 452

14. Shaukat Usmani, *Historic Trips of a Revolutionary*, New Delhi, 1977 ; p. 91

15. Inprecor, Vol. VIII ; 72 (1928)

16. Luhani, Inprecor VIII, 78 (1928) ; 1472

17. *Marxism and Asia*, Op. Cit., pp. 233-4

18. Ibid, p. 167

19. Ibid, p. 190

20. *Documents*, Op. Cit., Vol. III-C, 1928 ; p. 420

21. M. N. Roy, *Our Differences*, 1938 ; p. 68

22. Communique in the Indian Gazette of 31 October 1929

23. Manuscript dated May 20, 1927, and copied March 24, 1928 and published as a pamphlet by the CPGB in July 1928 ; vide : *Documents of the History of the Communist Party of India*, Vol. III-C 1928 ; published in December 1928.

24. Haithcox, Op. Cit., p. 135

X. The Comintern Congressess

AT THE OUTBREAK OF THE FIRST WORLD WAR NEARLY ALL socialist parties of the warring nations 'suspended' the principle of class struggle and pledged to defend unconditionally their respective capitalist states, the abolition of which had been their professed aim.[1] The consequent collapse of the Second International led Lenin to demand in a manifesto of his party[2] dated November 1914 that a new International should be established and the "imperialist war" should be turned into a war against the bourgeoisie.

The most important international Socialist Conference of the war years met at Zimmerwald (near Berne) from 5 to 8 September 1915 where Lenin expounded his views. But Lenin was in a minority and even the left-wing German delegates[3] rejected his proposal. Rosa Luxemburg however took up Lenin's cause in a political pamphlet[4] and at a clandestine meeting held in Karl Liebknecht's flat on January 1, 1916 the Gruppe International accepted Rosa's "Theses on the Tasks of International Social Demoracy",[5] the 12th Theses of which stated that "since the Second International had been unable to organize common action by the proletariat of all countries, a new workers' International must be formed". Lenin renewed his demand on return to Russia in April 1917 and said "Our Party must not 'wait' but must immediately found a third International".

The international aspect was also brought out in the programme of the 'Communist Party of Germany' founded in December 1919 and January 1920. Commenting on this action of the *Spartakasbund,* Lenin wrote ". . . . when the Spartakasbund called itself the 'Communist Party of Germany', then the foundation of a really proletarian, really international, really revolutionary Third International, a Communist International, became a fact".[6]

The Third, the Communist International, or Comintern, was founded at the first world Congress held in Moscow on 2 March 1918. Thet first Congress was however a founding session which merely issued a manifesto, the second Communist Manifesto, 71 years after the first.

According to some observers, and E. H. Carr, author of *The Bolshevik Revolution,* is one of them, only three Congresses of the Communist International were important—the second, third and the fourth. The fourth was the last one attended by Lenin, who suffered his second stroke shortly afterwards.

Later the Comintern ceased to be international, gradually and increasingly becoming an instrument of the world's only Socialist State[7] and wholly concerned with that State's consolidation. Through sheer inertia international issues continued to be discussed in the Fifth (1924) and the Sixth (1928) Congresses from the world working class movement's point of view but the interests of Soviet Russia overshadowed them.

Roy was absent from the First and the Sixth but attended the intervening ones, and was prominent in debates on the colonial question.

The First Congress had been preoccupied with the prospects of a revolution sweeping across Europe, more particularly Germany, as not only a key to world revolution but also as an urgent requirement for the survival of the communist revolution in Russia. The atmosphere was optimistic, though the optimism was rather flimsily based on short-lived proletarian uprisings in Europe. The optimism was more strongly generated by the Marxist reading of history, which was often taken as a prophecy, that the industrialized countries will eventually witness the seizure of power by the proletariat.

The weight of this prophecy was so immense that the experience of the latter part of the 19th century had not weakened it. As discussed earlier in this book the result of industrialization was that the proletariat in both Britain and France had lost revolutionary fervour, and had turned into sedate and aristocratic working classes. After that the hope for a proletarian revolution had hinged on Germany, where a very large Social Democratic Party commanded a substantial number of seats in the Reichstag.

After the 1905-7 abortive Russian attempt at a revolution, Rosa Luxemburg had predicted that the world revolution would start from Russia. Lenin came to subscribe to this view only in 1915, and two years later led the Bolsheviks to triumph. According to orthodox Marxism, revolution was a consequence of industrial development, and therefore an agrarian country like Russia was unqualified for it.

The tendency was to treat the Russian revolution as a fluke, which needed at least a revolution in neighbouring industrialized Germany to save it. Lenin did subscribe to that pathetic prayer.[8] By the time the Second Congress met, the Red Army had beaten back the Polish offensive in Ukraine and was advancing towards Warsaw. It was a propitious moment for reiterating hope for a revolution in Europe, but a shift in Comintern policy was needed—from spontaneous uprisings guided by a cohesive and disciplined party to liberation by the Red Army, or in other words from revolution to Red Napoleanism. That was an idea to which Trotsky might have subscribed then, and which Stalin carried out in practice quarter of a century later, but to which Lenin was averse.

The Polish invasion had however rekindled Russian patriotism. The British Labour delegation visiting Russia in May 1920 noticed it—"the birth and growth of a new patriotism".[9] Zinoviev was quick to recognise the significance of this new "asset". He declared: "The war is becoming national. Not only the advanced sections of the peasantry but even the wealthy peasants are hostile to the designs of the Polish landowners —We Communists must be at the head of this national movement which will gain the support of the enitre population and daily grows stronger".[10]

The Polish war helped to transform the revolutionary Red Army into a national army. On its outbreak, Brusilev, the last Tsarist Commander-in-Chief, offered his services to the Red Army, and proposed to convene a conference of prominent Tsarist officers to consider ways and means of assisting in its organization. The offer was accepted by the revolutionary Government in Russia[11] even though Marx had said that the takeover of the army of the previous regime was not exactly revolutionary. Radek was to note later in the year that an elite had "crystallized out of the old Tsarist officers which is inwardly united with the Soviet Government."

This resurgence of Russian nationalism must have tinged at least a section of the Russian delegation to the Second Congress, and that was the largest and the most important delegation. The tint could not have escaped Roy s notice, though with his usual reticence about Lenin, Stalin and Soviet Russia he refrained from commenting on it.

The resurgence of Russian nationalism must have been a factor at the Congress, though not prominent. Neither was Stalin prominent who was later to replace the *La Internationale* by the Russian national anthem as the evening chant from the Kremlin during the second world war.[12] The other factor was the heritage of Marxist thought both orthodox and revisionist, as stated in the original classics and later developed during the Second International period (1889-1914), and the parallel revisionism of Eduard Bernstein since 1899, contested severely by Kautsky and Rosa Luxemburg. Thirdly, the Comintern had invited and received delegates from outside Europe on a much wider and larger scale unlike the Second International; and lastly, Leninism, which had been developing since 1902 had gained immense prestige because of the Russian revolution but had still remained incomplete.

The incompleteness of Leninism was most manifest in the appraisal of Asian bourgeoisie—Africa had none till then and for some unexplained reason Latin America drew no reference.

In 1911 Lenin was so enthused with the enlightenment of Sun Yat-sen that he wrote: "In Asia there is *still* a bourgeoisie capable of standing for a sincere, energetic, consistent democracy, a worthy comrade of the great teachers and great revolutionaries of the eighteenth century in France. In contrast the Western bourgeoisie was rotten and already confronted by its grave-digger the proletariat".[13]

Two ideas stand out from Lenin's statement: (1) the Asian bourgeoisie was capable of effecting a democratic revolution and ending feudalism, and as a corollary, (2) the proletariat being absent in colonial countries the graves of the European bourgeoisie could not be dug there.

Roy differed with Lenin on both these, because of his Indian and Mexican experience. He did not expect the Indian bourgeoisie to be either capable of effecting a revolution or being consistently democratic. He knew from personal experience that the Indian bourgeoisie, even when successful in capturing power, will not carry out a democratic revolution. The ties of Indian feudalism were not only economic but also ritual,[14] but this recognition was outside the Marxist thought of those days. The proletariat in India was small but capable of effective action against both Western and Indian bourgeioisie in collaboration with the landless peasantry if properly led. He had been to Japan, and was not impressed by the democratic qualities of the Japanese. He had met Sun Yat-sen and not found in him a worthy comrade of either Voltaire or Danton.

On one point Maring (Sneevliet) who had lived and travelled in Asia corroborated Roy. Maring said: "It suffices to note that in Java alone there are 200 large sugar refineries employing a numerous proletariat, to understand that these Eastern countries also have a certain importance for the revolution. ......The peasants are the proprietors of their land, but in reality they are completely proletarianized."[15] But he would not go as far as Roy. The Eastern countries, according to him, also had a certain importance for the revolution but were not as important as Roy made them out.

On his way to Moscow, Roy had met August Thalheimer in Berlin. Thalheimer belonged to the group of Rosa Luxemburg and shared her views. In Moscow Roy had found in Rosa's views strong support for his own ideas and boldly expressed these ideas. This brought him closer to Thalheimer, and also earned him respect from Lenin. Roy had later named Thalheimer as one of his *gurus.*[16]

Subsequent events proved Roy right : after Indian independence the bourgeoisie integrated the principalities in 1948 but abolished privy purses only in 1970 ; it abolished feudal tenures in the early fifties but the abolition resulted only in transferring the obligations to a lower but more numerous strata of agrarian gentry who did not till land themselves, while the size of the landless peasantry has been growing because distribution of land had not been carried out properly or effectively.

But Roy had also erred. That was in assuming that the European proletariat was interested in a revolution, forgetting that Bernstein had pronounced 21 years earlier that revolution and the vital role of the proletariat had lost their importance in the industrialized countries.

Roy's appeal to the British proletariat contained in the *Indian Communist Manifesto,* for a joint Indo-British action to terminate capitalism evoked no response. It had not been wrongly addressed because as far back as 1904, H. M. Hyndman, a British socialist, had actually helped the Indian freedom movement. And so had Tony Quelch, who as a member of the Comintern had sat on the Commission which had examined the respective theses of Lenin and Roy on the Colonial Question.

Quelch stated that the rank and file English workers would consider it treachery to help enslaved people in their revolt against British rule. He further contended that "the jingo and chauvinist-minded labour aristocracy in England and America represents a very great danger to socialism".[17] Roy's bitterness in regard to the Second International was shared by Quelch, who contended that the labour aristocracy in England and America "is the strongest support of the Second International".

This was a major problem confronting the Third International. The Third International had replaced the Second but the constituent parties outside Russia and Germany had remained the same. The background of the Third International was opposition to socialist parties abjuring internationalism during World War I and going patriotic, but this denial of patriotism did not extend to the colonies. When it did, the line was drawn across Gladstonian principles as exemplified in Home Rule for Ireland. The Home Rule was for the bourgeoisie, and not for the workers and peasants.

In the Comintern the outlook was determined by Russia for whom concessions to nationalities was important. It had been one of the achievements of the Russian revolution, and as Roy was to write later, Lenin's declaration of the right to self-determination for nationalities preceded that of President Wilson.[18] But each nationality accommodated within the Soviet Union with grant of autonomy had its affairs run by a Communist Party. And Roy's contention was that the leadership of national liberation movement in the colonies should vest with corresponding parties.

But the Russian party was not keenly interested in the colonial question. It had no colonies, only nationalities. The next largest party, the German, had lost all its colonies during the first world war. The Communist Party was negligible in Great Britain. The French Communist Party was large but awkwardly placed; so was the Italian Party. Roy's theses therefore did not get the attention it deserved. Lenin's, which had been circulated earlier, of course elicited more support than Roy's which was put before the members only at the Congress. Besides, Roy's was only Supplementary theses, and not alternative, to Lenin's and was submitted on Lenin's suggestion.

The Third Congress followed a trade agreement between Soviet Russia and Britain. Soviet Russia was anxious to establish relations with Western powers and therefore relegated the colonial question to unimportance.

The Fourth Congress met after the rise of fascism in Italy, and therefore emphasized the need for united action with nationalist parties both in Europe and Asia. Roy had to protest that collaboration with the bourgeoisie had been carried too far, pointing out that experience belied the expection that such collaboration led to unity. His contention was strengthened by the expulsion of communists including Tan Malaka from the *Sareekat Islam* in the Dutch East Indies.[29] He insisted on the assertion of proletarian leadership without being sectarian.

The Fifth Congress continued the same policy rather more explicitly in spite of Roy's opposition. Unconditional support promised to nationalist movements of the bourgeoisie inhibited the growth of Communist parties in colonial countries. Stalin having decided to consolidate socialism in one country was no longer desirous of burdening his resources with commitments elsewhere. Tamara Deutscher wrote in the introduction to Alfred Rosmer's *Moscow Under Lenin* :

> "The Fifth Congress of the Comintern, in July 1924, deprived even the most sanguine of foreign communists of any illusion that the International would remain what it set out to be : a world party, transcending national barriers and interests, a center of the revolutionary labour movement, which would reflect the inner democracy and freedom of expression prevailing in each of the parties constituting it".[20]

In Asia it meant collaboration with countries which were nominally free, even if feudal. The policy found outlet in China through collaboration with the Kuomintang. There were difficulties in carrying it out, and it is possible that Roy and Stalin viewed the situation differently,—the former from the point of possible success of the revolution in China, and the latter solely out of the interests of the Soviet state. Here too there was an element of contradiction. The interests of the Soviet state could have been best served by a revolution carried out under Russian aegis in the biggest country on the Soviet's flank. Yet, Stalin probably had different ideas, concerned with challenges inside the Comintern and his eagerness to establish his supreme authority in it.

After the Fifth Congress the Comintern declined in importance. Annual conferences—the long gap between the Fourth

(1922) and the Fifth (June 1924) was due to Lenin's illness and death in January 1924—were given up, and the Sixth Congress in 1928 was largely held to communicate to an international audience the fervour generated at the 10th anniversary of the Russian Revolution (November 1927) and to assimilate it in theoretical terms.

The background to the theoretical terms was not provided by prospects of revolution abroad but by the Russian First Five Year plan (launched in 1928)—by the desire to build up a militarily and economically strong Russia. Revolutions elsewhere had to await the emergence of Russia as a Power. The Chinese Party Congress held in Moscow concurrently with the Sixth Comintern Congress was an attempt not to squander whatever had been built in the shape of a party.

Roy had no place in that Congress, nor was he able to attend it because of illness. For all practical purposes his association with the Comintern had come to an end.

His subsequent role was with Brandlerian revolutionaries who were still carrying on with the prospect of effective communist initiative outside Russia, and on the basis of local resources. The near communion of ideas and the memory of an international brotherhood could not however be easily forgotten. Roy did entertain the hope to pursuade Stalin to re-establish the Comintern—a hope that he did not give up even after the second world war.

The Comintern however had come to an end. The Seventh Congress (1935) was the last, and in 1943 the organization was dissolved.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Tamara Deutscher's Introduction in Alfred Rosmer, *Moscow Under Lenin*, Monthly Review Press, 1971 ; p. ix

2. Gunther Nollau, *International Communism and world Revolution*, Hollis and Carter, London, 1961 ; p. 34

3. Ibid, p. 34; Also, Ruth Fischer, *Stalin and German Communism*, Cambridge, Mass, U.S.A.: 1948; p. 12, Note 3

4. Rosa Luxemburg, *Ausgewahlte Reden und Schrifen*, Berlin, 1951, p. 258 ff.

5. Ruth Fischer, Op. Cit., p. 610

6. Lenin, *Sochineniya*, xxiii, pp. 494-5, quoted in E. H. Carr, *The Bolshevik Revolution*; Vol. 3, Penguin Books, 1966; p. 116

7. Franz Borkenau, writes in *World Communism*, University of Michigan Press, Ann Arbor, U.S.A., 1962: "Three periods can be clearly distinguished. During the first period the Comintern is mainly an instrument to bring about revolution. During the second period it is mainly an instrument in the Russian factional struggles. During the third period it is mainly an instrument of Russian foreign policy" (p. 419)

8. Fernando Claudin writes in *The Communist Movement: From Comintern to Cominform*; Penguin Books, 1975:

"The confidence Lenin showed in the victorious advance of the world revolution contains an assumption that the proletariat of the West will soon come over to the side of the revolutionary party..........The German 'November' was identified with the Russian 'February'." (p. 57)

(A leader of the Young Communists in Madrid and a student of architecture, Fernando Claudin abandoned, in or about 1933, all personal ambitions in order to become a functionary of the revolution. Claudin was expelled from the party in 1965 when for years he had been a member of the Spanish CP's Politburo.)

9. E. H. Carr, Op. Cit., Vol. 3; p. 273; See also *Pravda*, 18 May 1920

10. Ibid, p. 273

11. Ibid, p. 275

12. M. N. Roy, *Memoirs*, p. 330

13. *Marxism and Asia*, Op. Cit., p. 138

Franz Borkenau comments in *World Communism*, Op. Cit.,:

"......practically all those who have met Sun Yat-sen without being imbued with the admiration of the disciple for the leader, have drawn a very different picture; English 'bourgeois' observers agree with a detached and educated communist such as M. N. Roy about the outstanding feature of Sun Yat-sen's political activity; he was a schemer" p. 298)

14. Roy *Memoirs*, Op. Cit., pp. 378-81

15. Maring's (Sneevliet) speech at the Second Congress of the Comintern as quoted in *Marxism and Asia*, Op. Cit., p. 164

16. Haithcox, Op. Cit., p. 130

17. Tony Quelch's speech at the Second Congress of the Comintern quoted in *Marxism and Asia,* Op. Cit., p. 159

18. Roy *Memoirs,* p. 355

19. In 1912 a Muslim party (Sareekat Islam) was founded by Javanese leaders to promote the interests of the native population. It acquired a large membership and took on a mixed religious-nationalist complexion. In 1914 a group of Dutchmen, of whom Sneevliet was the most important, formed a Social Democratic Association of the Indies (ISVD) as the centre of secular radical movement. This movement gathered strength during the war and especially after the Russian revolution, but in 1918 Sneevliet was expelled by the Dutch authorities. In May 1920 the ISVD was transformed into the Communist Party of the Indies (PKI), and Sneevliet represented this party under the alias 'Maring' at the Second Congress of the Comintern. Sareekat Islam expelled all communists in mid-Twenties which virtually reduced the PKI into a small group.

20. Alfred Rosmer, Op. Cit., p. xiv

XI. Return to India

A YEAR AFTER THE SIXTH CONGRESS, ROY WROTE TO STALIN. The letter has not been traced so far. He never received any reply to that. The tenth plenum of the Comintern (July 3-19, 1924) under Stalin's directive adopted a tough "ultra-left" policy. The CPI was instructed to sever all ties with the nationalist movement and attack all sections of the Indian National Congress, including Jawaharlal Nehru who had less than two years earlier been welcomed to the conference of the "League Against Imperialism" at Brussels, and at the tenth anniversary of the Russian Revolution at Moscow. The Independence for India League, which was formed after Brussels, was characterized as a "vague organization", some of whose leaders,—reference was to Subhas Chandra Bose—were "inclined towards fascism".[1] The tenth plenum also dubbed Nehru as "an agent of reformist national bourgeoisie" and condemned him "for attempting 'to stifle the rise of the revolutionary movement' and channel it towards moderate 'bourgeois-reformism' ".[2]

After about one year Roy more openly aligned himself with the German Communist Party (Opposition)[3] by writing an article criticising the official German C.P. for having called a general strike on May Day in 1924 which became a flop.[4] But while in Berlin Roy also contributed five articles to the *International Press Correspondence* between the Sixth Congress and the tenth plenum. At the tenth plenum Kuusinen mocked at Roy's concern that certain members of the Independence for India League might return to the camp of the bourgeoisie.

G. A. K. Luhani who had defended Roy the year before at the Sixth Congress took the opportunity to announce his complete accord with the Sixth Comintern Congress. Just as he had once abandoned Virendranath Chattopadhyaya, he now repudiated Roy and equated Roy with Jawaharlal Nehru—"an agent of the reformist nationalist bourgeoisie", "a Nehru with wider European experience and greater skill".[5]

The tenth plenum also decided that anybody who would in any way associate with the Brandlerite opposition C. P. would have no place in the Comintern. Roy was expelled from the Comintern in September 1929, the same month he began a series of articles on "the Crisis in the Comintern". The announcement which appeared in *Inprecor,* IX, 69 (1929); 1470 read inter-alia :

> "In accordance with the resolution of the Tenth Plenum of the ECCI on the international situation and the tasks of the Communist International, Parapraph 9, and the decisions of the ECCI of 19 December, 1928 according to which adherents of the Brandler organization cannot be members of the Communist International, the Presidium of the ECCI declares that Roy, by contributing to the Brandler press and supporting the Brandler organization, has placed himself outside the ranks of the Communist International and is to be considered as expelled from the Communist International".[6]

Roy later wrote :

> "A wrong estimate of the character of the Indian revolution logically leads to absurd notions about the perspective of its development. The absurdity was evidenced by the tactics recommended by the Sixth Congress of the Communist International, and practised in India by its uncritical adherents".
>
> "A dangerous mistake on the part of the Communist Party of India was the inability to differentiate between the leadership and rank and file of the Congress. It failed to

> appreciate the objectively revolutionary significance of the Congress".
>
> "I am of the opinion that, as a movement, the national Congress is of a great revolutionary significance. It commands the confidence of the oppressed and exploited masses, that is to say, of the forces of the democratic national revolution. It is a great mistake to look upon it as a political party of the bourgeoisie. The Congress is a coalition of classes".
>
> "For holding these views and for criticising the mistakes of the leaders of the Communist International, I was condemned as a renegade to Communism as an agent of the bourgeoisie, and even as a lackey of Imperialism".[7]

The other reason, probably more important to the Comintern leaders as it was nearer home, was Roy's advocacy, along with Brandler group, of formation of a broader united front, inclusive of the Social Democrats, against rising fascism in Germany. Roy was located in Germany and saw for himself this rising threat not only to International Communism but also to the freedom and civilization of Europe. And for Roy the survival of European civilization was of paramount importance.

After his expulsion from the Comintern, Brandler, in 1929, published, to justify himself, a letter that Stalin had earlier written to Zinoviev and Bukharin in 1923: "It is in our interest", Stalin wrote in that letter, "that the fascists should attack first. That will rally the whole of the working class round the communists. Moreover, according to all information, the fascists are weak in Germany".[8]

After his expulsion Roy decided to return to India against the advice of his friends, the Brandler-Thalheimer group. He had once agreed to stay on in Moscow on Stalin's request in 1925, but this time he was much more firm. Brandler was the most insistent and warned him that he would be arrested as he set his foot on Indian soil.

Before he himself came, Roy sent one of his close Indian associates in Germany, Tayab Shaikh[9] and a few others with a manifesto. In that manifesto, dated July, 1930, which was addressed to the "Revolutionary Vanguard of the toiling masses of India" Roy criticised the new Comintern line and urged Indian communists to reject that line. One of the themes Roy stressed in the manifesto was the demand for a Constituent Assembly and forging of a united national front on that slogan to confront the common enemy, British Imperialism.[10]

In that manifesto, "Our Task in India", Roy said "the battle of the Indian revolution will have to be fought and won in the villages.... For the peasants, the national revolution means the agrarian revolution—the expropriation of the princes and the landlords" The solution of the agrarian problem was to Roy "the essential condition for India's becoming an industrial country"—a theme that he reiterated in 1944 in the "People's Plan for Post-war Economic Reconstruction of India". Roy argued that industrial development was dependent upon a sound agricultural base which would provide for the "development of the purchasing power of the masses".

Roy's agrarian programme approximated that of Lenin, and he frequently quoted Lenin on the necessity of gaining the support of the peasantry for success of revolution in a pre-capitalistic society. In a letter to his associates in India written from jail, Roy wrote "the appreciation of the revolutionary role of the peasantry in an industrially backward country is one of the basic conditions of Leninism".[11]

Roy in fact formulated his programme and tactics for India on the model of the French Jacobins. He felt that in India the revolution should be under the banner "not of Communism, but of Jacobinism". Hence, Roy sought to replace the radical line of the Sixth Comintern Congress for creation of Soviets in India with the Jacobin slogan for a Constituent Assembly which he thought would appeal to a broader spectrum of political opinion. When he urged Congressmen to adopt the demand for the convening of a Constituent Assembly to draft the Constitution of Free India, he was in reality "aiming at the Jacobin Convention which represented the forces of petty bourgeois radicalism".[12]

Expounding his ideas, which he called "Twentieth Century Jacobinism", Roy told his followers in India:

> "If we wish to find a historical analogy to the task set to ourselves, we should fix upon neither the Russian Revolution nor any other revolution of our time. We shall have to go farther back and find our prototype in the Jacobins of the French Revolution....The Jacobins carried through the bourgeois revolution in the teeth of opposition of the bourgeoisie. The representatives of the bourgeoisie, who had heralded the revolution, went over to the camp of counter-revolution, and the Jacobins carried it through against the feudal aristocracy as well as the big bourgeoisie. The relation of classes in contemporary India is somewhat analogous".
>
> "The Indian revolution is taking place in an entirely different period of history, when the relation of classes on the world scale has completely changed, and the economic conditions and technological development, necessary for the reconstruction of the world as a Socialist society, have been created. Therefore, once the revolution takes place in our time, though with a Jacobin ideology and with a Jacobinist programme, the tendency towards a direct development to Socialism, which was inherent in Jacobinism, will most probably prevail in our country".[13]

Travelling via Istanbul, Roy arrived in Karachi on 11 December 1930 and in Bombay on 17 December under the assumed name of Dr. Mahmud. After spending seven months in organising his group travelling extensively in U.P., Bombay and other areas, evading British police, he was finally arrested on 21 July 1931, and taken to Cawnpore jail for trial as an accused in the 1924 Kanpur Conspiracy Case. A British Intelligence officer later confided, that Roy was considered to be "the only man who could make communism a real danger in India".

In his first letter from jail, Roy wrote to Ellen Gottschalk on August 11. 1931 :

"I am afraid, Heinz (Brandler) must have given me up as hopeless. But, as I explained before my departure, it is a stage in the process. It must be gone through. No matter whatever may come through it....I hope they do understand. If not, well, it must be left for history to pass the final verdict".

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. "The Conference of the Workers and Peasants Party of India", Inprecor IX, 16 (1924), pp. 319-20 and Inprecor IX, 17 (1929), pp. 347-48

2. "Declaration of G. A. K. Luhani", *Inprecor*, IX, 48 (1929): 1039. Ironically, after about half a century, the same Nehru was eulogiesd by Ulyanovsky, in a special chapter in National Liberation (1978) as "an outstanding leader of the national liberation movement, a consistent fighter for peace, democracy and social progress, a staunch opponent of social injustice, colonialism, racism and national oppression, (and) a sincere friend of the Sovet Union" (p. 239)

3. Brandler group was expelled from the official German C. P. in 1928 and the leadership was replaced by Maslow and Ruth Fischer.

4. Only the workers of a single candy factory responded to the call, (Franz Borkenau, *World Communism : A History of the Communist International*, p. 340)

5. "Declaration of G. A. K. Luhani", Inprecor IX, 48 (1929) : p. 1039

6. The 1930 edition of the *Bolshaia Sovetokaia Entsiklopedia* also designated Roy as a "renegade"

7. M. N. Roy—*Our Differences*; Calcutta, 1938 ; pp. 6-20

8. Alfred Rosmer quotes the letter in his book, *Moscow Under Lenin* (published by Monthly Review Press, New York, 1971 ; p. 209) and comments :

"Stalin and Zinoviev agreed to try and clear the International of the responsibility (regarding failure of the May Day strike) by claiming it was all Brandler's fault. It was the first use of a scapegoat tactic which later became standard practice".

9. Author of "*The Man who Looked Ahead*", a biographical study of Roy published from India in 1938.

10. This manifesto preceded by several months the first Round Table Conference (12th November 1930 to 18th January 1931) held in

London to evolve a Constitution for India, in pursuance of the Viceroy's announcement on 31st October 1929 that Dominion Status was the goal of the country's political advancement.

11. M. N. Roy's Letter to Political Associates, dated Dehra Dun, Oct 29, 1934 preserved in Roy Archives, File N. 111/2.

John Patrick Haithcox has discussed this question at length in his book, "*Communism and Nationalism in India : M. N. Roy and Comintern Policy*, 1920-39" ; Princeton University Press, Princeton, U.S.A. ; 1971, Chapter on "Twentieth Century Jacobinism", pp. 259-296

12. M. N. Roy's Letter to Political Associates ; Dehra Dun, October 29, 1934 ; in M. N. Roy Archives.

13. M. N. Roy—*Scientific Politics* ; Indian Renaissance Publications, pp. 123-151

XII. Comintern on Borrowed Time

THE THIRD OR COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL WAS WOUND UP IN 1943 but according to most competent observers the organization had lost its relevance after the failure of the 1923 attempt at a revolution in Germany. At least M N. Roy thought so, but much later, around 1949-50, when he had the opportunity for hindsignt. Roy had accepted the responsibility of being the Comintern's agent in China in 1927—its only major engagement after the abortive German adventure.

China too was a disappointment, some how retrieved 22 years later. But there was no Comintern withdrawal from the involvement there. Only the scale of involvement was reduced; actually whittled down to the nominal presence of Heinz Neumann[1] who succeeded Roy as the Comintern representative.

Existence on borrowed time is as much a strain on an organization as on individuals. The awareness of loss of relevance and significance, however dimly perceived, induces panic. Out of sheer inertia comfort was sought in an expectation of things righting themselves after a time, of the calm being freshened by a wind which would hasten passage towards the supposed goal.

But since the goal of world revolution had receded into a distant utopian future, though not wholly abandoned, there was a reluctance to appraise the situation afresh. Such an appraisal was required because neither the first and the only socialist State, nor the rest of the world had stood still since either 1920 or 1927.

The forces of revolution had weakened; those of counter-revolution had strengthened. To admit these two facts was to forsake faith in the ultimate triumph of the revolution, to recognize as dupes all those signs of success being round the corner on which revolutionary hopes had been built and nurtured. It seemed tantamount to renegading from the revolutionary creed.

So, instead of looking to the future, solace was being derived from the past. If capitalist and imperialist rivalry in the past, between Britain and Germany, had led to a war which had proved to be a windfall for the revolutionary cause there was no need for alarm at German nationalist resurgence.

Because purity of revolutionary idealism had led to the triumph of a minority over the bulk of patriotic Social Democrats the task before Communists was to continue the relentless fight against Socialists and expose the thinness of their allegiance to Marxism. Zimmerwald had shown the way, and that way was to be followed.

The rise of fascism (in Italy since 1926 and in Germany a year later) did not call for a change of policy. The Comintern leadership was not however so sure of itself, and tried to steer itself clear of deviations either to the Left or the Right.

The struggle for power within the Russian Communist party, for the control of the socialist State, prevented the pursuit of a steady course. From curbing and checking the Left deviation the next step was to its liquidation which could not be achieved without the support of the Rightists. After the liquidation of the Left, the support of the Right was not required and it too in turn was liquidated.

First among the victims were the German leaders of 1923 —Heinrich Brandler and August Thalheimer. They were replaced by Maslow and Ruth Fischer, who in turn were replaced by Wilhelm Pieck. Brandler and Thalheimer were not functionaries, dependant upon the Soviet leadership as were their successors. They had following in Germany. They set out to contest the Comintern policy in Germany.

They voiced their criticism through a journal titled *Gegen den Strom.* On return from China, Roy wrote an article for that journal pointing out the situation the Comintern was facing in 1929. The article was headed *Crisis in the Comintern.* He also signed a manifesto seeking a reversal of Comintern policy in Germany, advocating some sort of joint action with Socialists to prevent the rise of Nazism. He was expelled from the Comintern.

He returned to India in 1930 and was jailed. A substantial part of the Comintern's borrowed time—and the most difficult years coincided with Roy's years in prison (1931-36). The history of the critical years of the Comintern has not been written, because the struggle for power in Russia overshadowed it.

Certain glimpses into it are available in the letters that Roy wrote to Ellen Gottschalk (whom he married on his release) from jail in India, in 1937. He was permitted only one letter each month, and since the letters were censored a kind of code was used. Names of Comintern leaders would have been blacked out. So Leon Trotsky was referred to as the Lion.

Before we consider Roy's letters let us examine three different series of events.

Firstly the European communist parties. In Italy there was no activity after 1926—the year Serrati died, Gramsci was subjected to a term in prison which ended only with his death, and Togliatti sought refuge in exile.

Successive changes in the leadership of the German party ended in 1933 when the Nazis overran the country. The last pair Ernst Thelmann and Willi Munzenberg fled from the country with several others. Munzenberg operated from Paris but did not oblige Moscow with a visit after the Moscow trial of 1936.

It would be interesting to know of the respective sizes of the Italian, German and French parties in the 1920s. They were the largest, and though France was not threatened by any Fascist upsurge till much later, the Comintern crisis did affect its nerves. Rosmer had left earlier in 1924 but his successor Jacques Doriot left in 1934 because the Comintern expressed disapproval of his advocacy of a popular front with Socialists. He was succeeded by Maurice Thorez.

There were other drop-outs, mostly in democratic countries. The Dutch astronomer Pannekoek left the C. P. in 1921 and retired from politics. The American Fraina quit the Comintern in 1922 and turned anti-Communist. His compatriot Jay Lovestone had to leave because in 1928 he had backed Bukharin against Stalin. A second Dutchman, Sneevliet, later joined Trotsky.

By 1929 a Communist Party Opposition (CPO) grew up. It was strongest in Germany, and was branded by the Comintern as the Brandlerite Opposition. However it had followings elsewhere—notably in Sweden, another country with a large Social Democratic Party.

In July 1930, probably on the 20th day of that month, Roy signed a manifesto advocating that Communists and Socialists bury the hatchet picked up at Zimmerwald in 1915, since Fascism threatened them both.

The intimate connexion between the Russian party and the international organization was never formally stated but it was there. Even in Lenin's time the day to day leadership of the Comintern vested in the members of the Russian party. Decisions of paramount importance were of course Lenin's. Trotsky lent a hand especially in matters relating to France.

Otherwise Zinoviev (expelled from the party in 1927), Radek, Bukharin and Kamenev carried on the work. The result of the power struggle in the Russian party was to rob the Comintern of its experienced cadre. Trotsky was expelled from the party in 1928 and externed from Russia the following year and eventually murdered in Mexico in 1940.

Zinoviev and Kamenev were executed in 1936 and Bukharin in 1938. Radek was in prison from 1936 to 1946, and Borodin had a chequered career alternating between prison and minor offices.[2] Neumann, who replaced Roy in China disappeared after arrest in 1937. Many of these eventual victims of the terror of the 1930s had tried to save themselves by capitulation to Stalin.

The Comintern Congress was expected to meet every year after the Second Congress but did not between 1928 and 1935. Those were the years of the crisis.

Brandler and Thalheimer were expelled in 1928 for advocating a united front with Socialists. Doriot also had to leave the organization for advocating united fronts. But at the Seventh Congress in 1935 the Comintern advised all Communist parties in Europe to strive for united and popular fronts. It can be argued that the time was not ripe for such a line in 1928, 1929, 1933, or 1934. When the Comintern leadership thought in July-August 1935 the time was ripe it was too late to stem the tide of fascism.

Comintern sectarianism between 1929 and 1935 was criticised, among others, by Trotsky, and therefore any plea for a more liberal approach was branded as Trotskyite. As George Bernard Shaw wrote around the turn of the century "the fact that mankind, being for the most part incapable of politics, accepts vituperation as an easy and congenial substitute."

The above is truer of Communists than any other group. Many otherwise intelligent Communists were afraid of being called Trotskyite. However fear of vituperation did not prevent Roy, Brandler, Thalheimer or Lovestone from seeking a change in Comintern policy.

The Communist Party Opposition (CPO) held a meeting in Germany in 1932 to sound alarm against the Comintern policy of regarding Socialists instead of Fascists as the main enemy. Form jail, Roy conveyed his good wishes and expressed his solidarity with the sponsors of the conference.

The CPO held an international conference during Easter 1934 and appealed to the Comintern to let its representatives attend the Seventh Comintern Congress the following summer, so that points of difference might be discussed and a reunion of all the Communist forces might take place.

The appeal was ignored. The line advocated by the CPO became the Comintern line at the Seventh Congress. There were no acknowledgements except indirectly to Trotsky who almost coincidentally with the CPO conference launched the Fourth International in 1934.

Comintern leaders were afraid of Trotsky. He was a Russian of equal stature with Lenin and Stalin, and could command lurking loyalties and sympathy. Brandler or Doriot or Roy were foreigners—mere names in Russia. Rosmer, Doriot and Sneevliet joined Totsky. So did Ruth Fischer, and some German members of the CPO. Some of the CPO in Sweden had already joined the Social Democratic Party.

It is difficult to assess the extent to which the Moscow trials of 1936 and 1938 were the result of Stalin's panic at Trotsky launching the Fourth International. The inference from the situation is clear. The power struggle in the Russian party was over by 1934. Zinoviev had sided with Trotsky in 1925. Bukharin had till recently been opposed to Stalin.

All these people had changed their postures so often that they could not be trusted to be loyal to Stalin after as eminent a rival as Trotsky had appeared on the scene with a new International. Revolutionaries do believe that the more extremist an organization the greater chances it has of success. The Third International ascribed its success to having taken a more extremist line than the Second. The same could happen with the Fourth. Even historical materialism does not deny the roles that a Lenin or a Trotsky play.

That Stalin was really afraid of Trotsky is borne out by latter's murder in far-off Mexico by a Stalinist on August 21, 1940—even after all potential Trotskyites had been executed after two Moscow trials. World War II had broken out on September 3, 1939, and Russia had concluded a no-war pact with Germany on August 25, 1939 but Stalin could take no chances. The pact was one of convenience on either side (that it was so on Hitler's was proved by Germany's attack on Russia on 22nd June 1941). There was every possibility of Trotsky travelling in a sealed train across Germany, as Lenin had done during World War I, to effect an overthrow of Stalin.

But to go back to 1935. The change in the Comintern line was so late that it could not affect political events in either Germany or Italy but in France elections in 1936 returned a short-lived Popular Front Government. Meanwhile in Spain a civil war (1936-39) was fought out, as far as the Fascists were cencerned as a rehearsal for World War II, revealing the Comintern's helplessness for the second time to help militarily a pro-socialist government (the first occasion was in China in 1927).

Whereas in personal correspondence Roy condoned Russian reluctance to help the Spanish Republicans on grounds of logistics he had been critical of Russian ambivalence in China. Of course China being contiguous (though warlord territories intervened) his complaint had an element of justification.

Germany's attack on Soviet Russia and the latter's involvement along with capitalist countries like Britain, and subsequently the U.S.A., in the effort to protect the Socialist State was virtually a fulfilment of the CPO demand for co-operation in the fight against fascism. But on both sides the co-operation was treated as one dictated by the exigencies of the war.

The co-operation resulted in the dissolution of the Comintern in 1943. The Comintern throughout the period 1919-1935 had been emotionally distrustful of capitalist and imperialist countries and of liberals and socialists of those countries. The dissolution was an act to propitiate the rulers of capitalist countries; the democratic sections of the populations of those countries were forgotten. So were the national bourgeoisie in the colonies of those countries. As for the exploited masses of those colonial countries, they did not appear in any reckoning. Both the Second Congress theses—those of Lenin favourable to the national bourgeoisie and those of Roy insistent on mobilization of the masses--were as good as not having been adopted. The Comintern treated them in its senility as excesses of youth.

Since much of the information about the course of events in the Comintern's senility has been gleaned from Roy's letters from jail it would be relevant to quot extracts from them.

June 10, 1933 : Expression of distress at Brandler and Thalheimer having been deserted by their associates in the German C. P. "I hope experience has taught them the correctness of my attitude—no new shop but flood the Linie (official CI) with new shareholders enlisted by us."

July 14, 1933 : "The idea of opening a new shop in these days of depression is not only foolish, but will be an unpardonable crime. Only the monumental egoism of the Lion (Trotsky) can think of such a thing at this moment. Indeed, in view of the situation I would go to the extent of liquidation of our own business (CPO), had there been any change on the part of the Linie. In any case I would look out for any posible opportunity. Let it be clearly understood, nevertheless, that I have not changed my views in the least. But there are such things as emergency measures. This opinion of mine may be placed before the coming meeting of our Board" (CPO leadership).

August 10, 1933 : By the time Roy wrote this letter Hitler had come to power and the CPO leaders had quit Germany and were flocking to Paris. "How are all the friends ? The wandering Jews of the twentieth century."

September 22, 1933 : "Tell Heinz (Brandler) and August (Thalheimer) that I am very sorry not to be with them in these times of trouble. My position remains as determined as ever, although there is more than enough reason to shake it."

October 12, 1933 : "Heinz's note was pathetic. The old chap sounds somewhat depressed, although he tried to put up a brave face, I suppose in consideration of my own position. But I wish them to understand that I consider mine (being in prison) in no way worse than theirs—indeed much better than that of those caught in the Dritte Reich" (Third Reich).

December 23, 1933 : "I still think that, had our people (CPO) been more elastic in the attitude towards him (Sneevliet), we could have won him over."

February 24, 1934 : "I am eagerly looking out for the day when we shall celebrate a grand reunion, which let us pray will be all inclusive".

April 21, 1934 : "I am fully in agreement with the projected move at the coming general meeting. I suggest that the question of emergency be emphasized." The coded words refer to the CPO international conference (then scheduled for the Easter holidays) writing to Moscow seeking permission to attend the Seventh Comintern Congress more than a year thence in order to resolve differences through discussion for a reunion of all Communist forces.

June 19, 1934 : In spite of his warm feelings for Sneevliet, the letter conveyed Roy's disappointment at the Dutch comrade's enthusiasm over the launching of the Fourth International by Trotsky.

July 18, 1934 : Roy had equally warm feeling for Jacques Doriot and wanted to save his soul for the Comintern as much as Sneevliet's. "Did you see Doriot ? I am very curious about his future. Is there any danger of his going too far the other way ? I wish I was there. Cannot you represent me ?"

Well what Roy feared did occur. Doriot broke with the C. P. and founded the Parti Populaire Francais, which rapidly evolved to Fascism. During World War II, Doriot went further, turned a violent pro-Nazi and fought for Germany on the Russian front.

August 23, 1934 : "The Lion's 'Vierte Reich' (Fourth International of Trotsky) does not seem to be flourishing."

September 20, 1934 : "I am very anxious for news of all the friends scattered over the world. I am very sorry to hear about the debacle of Doriot......I am not optimistic about the results of the General Meeting (the Seventh and last World Congress of the Communist International). Yet one cannot but be curious, and deeply concerned. Old habit ? Yes. The swing to the opposite is alarming. I expressed the apprehension in the *'Crisis'* articles---in the one dealing with 'Leadership'. Please tell Heinz, August and others that I am always with them."

October 25, 1934 : "It was very kind of the Dutchman (Sneevliet) to place my case at the feet of his God (Trotsky) and one cannot but appreciate the goodwill of the latter. It is more than what can be expected from the occupants of Olympia (Comintern leadership). But the poor chap ! What can he possibly do ? Besides, with all his decency as a man, he is also a God with clay feet. If he was only content to be a man, he would go down in history as a really great man—something much bigger than a God."

November 23, 1934: "I am distressed to hear that you have to move on again. Since you wrote there has been a new cabinet crisis (Soviet leadership). From the scanty news I cannot judge the situation......but anything may happen anytime. Therefore, in my opinion, the idea of your visit to the Fatherland should be seriously considered......I am very worried about the position of our friends (CPO) too. Could they not find a better place than Ireland? What about the North? (Scandinavia)."

January 20, 1935: "As regards Grisha (Zinoviev) and his kind, I cannot understand them. Why don't they realize the truth—that they are back numbers. The world does not need them any longer. How much pleasanter it would be for themselves to spend the rest of their lives in the justifiable satisfaction of what they have really contributed." (Zinoviev was executed the following year).

April 24, 1935: "Don't you see them (Heinz and August) as often as ever? I eagerly wait to hear about them....I am keenly concerned with their affairs also....It is unfortunate that the negotiations (with the Comintern for a reunion) should proceed so slowly. There is plenty of reason to hurry up matters".

September 22, 1935: "I wonder if Heinz and August did go to the Exhibition (the Seventh Comintern Congress) and how they found it. As far as I can see it was an orgy of hero worship—and gods with clay feet at that. The Bandit (the Bulgarian Dimitrov, accused in Hitler's concocted case of burning down the German Parliament house, the Reichstag) raised to the high pedestal! (appointed General Secretary of the Communist International) What an idea! I thought old Marx taught us that history was not made by great men! And here are his devotees not only indulging in the cult of hero worship but actually manufacturing heroes for the purpose."

Dimitrov was the last General Secretary of the Comintern;

his predecessors included Angelica Balabanova, Karl Radek and Nicolai Bukharin.

October 21, 1935: "I also find the result of the last World Exhibition (Seventh Comintern Congress) satisfactory. Only, a lot of things were too flashy and superficial to command confidence. There was a lack of spontaneity, and absence of a robust assertion of the lessons of experience....Let us be gratified with whatever is realized, and hope for more. No intellectual independence—that is the curse....I have been accused of 'intellectualism', but that is not as despicable as sycophancy."

November 20, 1935: "I am anxious to have some news from the friends. Of course, nothing particular can be expected, and generally I have patched up a fairly complete picture from bits of news picked up from the available newspapers and periodicals. It is not a very bad picture. There is reason to be satisfied, but not too optimistic. As regards the Bandit (Dimitrov), he merely acted as the gramophone, and shall speak a different language any time he is told to do so. The system is vicious."

How does Willy (Munzenberg) speak to you so frankly? Don't worry as regards the future. We shall see."

January 21, 1936: "You see, after all, I still remain a personal admirer of my ex-friend (Stalin), who used to pride over our racial affinity, and called me 'gold'. Now, he won't appreciate me even as copper! But I have the weakness of giving the devil his due. And in my account, his due is very considerable. I was publicly castigated for this weakness once —at Weimar."

March 22, 1936: "It seems that 'Western Stability' is going to be secured, but by throwing Russia to the wolves.... Something more than Abysinnia is to be looted. Can the Western Powers and America sanction that loot, and save Western civilization? Nazi paganism and Japanese feudalism together will surely throw the achievements of the nineteenth century in to the flames of neo-barbarism; and Indian nationalism is ready with its 'spiritual message' to the world. The message is: endorsement of both the forms of crass materialism."

May 24, 1936: "The gods (Comintern leaders) must be rather embarrassed by the unexpected victory (in the French elections of May 1936 of the C. P. on a popular front programme). Only, will they never realize whose victory it is? (The hint is to the CPO advocacy of joining hands with Socialists). Having won a victory, in spite of themselves, they may not be sure of what to do with it. Are we going to see Thorez (French C. P. Secretary) calling at the Elysee? (French President's residence). That would finally destroy the legend of '23. (Of the Communists in Germany refusing to share office with Socialists).

"Thorez used to be a brave garcon. But I suppose he is thoroughly spoiled by now. Doriot seems to be going to the dogs. In an American periodical, I read some extracts from his speech in the Parliament in connexion with the ratification of the Franco-Soviet Pact. If the report was correct he made a nasty speech.

"It sounded like Sneevliet,—full of hatred and bitterness. Of course, Doriot has more than enough reason to be bitter. Others have too. But one must not lose balance. I am afraid he is losing it. That would be a great pity.

"I am very fond of him. He is one of the old friends I shall go a long way to meet again. Well, the currents and cross-currents of reality are beyond our power to control. But I cannot help holding the gods (Comintern leaders), particularly the minor ones, responsible for driving good men to despair."

August 23, 1936: "The Spanish drama.....is awfully exciting. But curiously enough, the cabled news did not give the personal composition of the (French) Front Populaire Cabinet, except mentioning the inclusion of three women. I have read some alarming news about Doriot. Who is this 'dissident' Communist reported to have joined the Cabinet?"

September 24, 1936: "I am rather confident about the final outcome of what is called the Spanish embroglio. But, of course, there always remains the danger of one of these international gunmen touching off the powder magazine on the pretext of the events in Spain. It is astounding how these chaps

(Hitler and Mussolini) manage to scare the wits out of the democratic statesmen, and get away swaggeringly with the loot.

"This Blumian (Leon Blum was the head of the French Popular Front Government) non-intervention in the Spanish affair is such an ineffective, though well-meant, effort to head off the nefarious plan of finding some plausible pretext. It would be a wise policy, if it was enforced by all those professing it. But it is not.

"I read of some hitch between Blum and Thorez. I am always a bit uneasy about this bouncing boy (Blum). Any weakening of the Front Populaire at this juncture would be catastrophic. The Spanish disease, nurtured from Italy and Germany, may then affect France. Will that create any better situation? I think not. Yet, on the other hand, Blum's back must be stiffened up.

"I read an astonishing bit of news about Jacques' (Doriot) new tendency. He is in the run for replacing De la Roque. It is incredible! Yet, who can say? That would mean personal blow for me. But one must be a superman not to be bitter at the treatment accorded to him. Even if he goes to the dogs, I shall always like him personally, and understand his feelings. That would, of course, not mean condoning his behaviour in the least."

October 21, 1936 (last letter from jail): "I am terribly worried. How could the Blumians (Socialists) be such confounded fools! Don't they see that the noose is relentlessly closing on their own accursed necks, with the aid and connivance of the 'democratic' Powers, for the pleasure of whom they are selling their souls, and themselves assisting the rape of democracy? The French Republic is doomed, unless some miracle happens......

"Doriot is a tragedy. Isn't he?...With his popularity, he can become a real danger. But who is to blame—originally? Even now I believe that he was driven to act desperately. He is hardly an emotional muddle-head like many others. Much, too much, provocation was necessary to drive him to the enemy's camp."[3]

Before the next four years had run out France surrendered to Germany.

The Comintern ceased to be of any importance after 1935. The Moscow trials threw every member into panic. The CPO leaders sought asylum wherever they could obtain it. Most of them went first to France and then to Cuba. Thalheimer died in Cuba in 1948 ; Brandler who reached Cuba in December 1941 returned to Europe after the war ended. He was in England, where Ruth Fischer met him twice or thrice between 1947 and 1949. He died in 1967 presumably in Germany. Maslow died in Cuba around 1941.

Ruth Fischer came to India and met Roy and was in correspondence with him before his death in 1954.

The reunion which Roy had hoped for a while in jail never took place. Neither could he correspond with either Brandler or Thalheimer. But he did write to Jay Lovestone, soon after coming out from jail, and discovered that they differed on Russian policy in Spain. Lovestone was critical of Russia for not sending armed help to the Republicans ; Roy thought that any armed help across Europe would have been not only unfruitful but might have involved Russia into a situation from which she would have found it difficult to extricate herself.

The fear of war with Germany was a major determinant of Russian policy between 1936 and 22nd June 1941 when Germany did attack Russia. The Russian leadership was anxious to avoid this war, whatever, happened to the rest of Europe. On August 23, 1939, Molotov on behalf of Russia, Ribbentrop on behalf of Germany, signed a non-aggression pact. Assured that they would not have to fight Russia, the Germas invaded Poland on September 1, 1939.

Russian troops also rumbled westwards and annexed Polish and Finnish territory ostensibly to secure an area of manoeuverability for themselves on non-Russian soil. Roy defended the Soviet pact with Germany as well as annexation of Polish and Finnish territory as acts intended to protect the socialist State.

When French resistance to German onslaught collapsed and British troops had to be pulled out of France, Roy organized anti-Fascist demonstrations, courted expulsion from the Indian National Congress, which he had joined after release from jail and organized a political party and a trade union front to fight the Fascist menace.

As he set much store by Twentieth Century Jacobinism the date for the formal founding of his political party, the Radical Democratic Party was fixed on the 151st anniversary of the storming of Bastille during the French Revolution.

But before the formal inauguration of the new political party, separate from the Communist Party of India affiliated to the Comintern, Roy held a study camp at Dehra Dun in May 1940, at which he outlined the necessity of helping the war against Fascist Germany and Italy.

The Communist Party of India pegged its thinking on the Molotov-Ribbentrop non-aggression pact, and wanted to oppose British war effort as merely a pursuit of imperialist designs. And they stuck to their line to a time six months after the German attack on Russia on June 22nd 1941. The instructions for a change in the party line was brought from the Comintern by an American Communist. Eighteen months after the change in the CPI line, that is on 10th June 1943 the Comintern was dissolved.

After the Dehra Dun study camp of May 1940, Roy sent an emissary to Moscow. That was Abdulla Safdar, one of those who were in Tashkent in 1922 when Roy founded the Communist Party of India in exile. The contents of the message from Roy that Abdulla Safdar carried to the Comintern is not known. The last letter that Safdar wrote was from Jalalabad in Afghanistan after having gone across the Indo-Afghan frontier.

No more was heard from Abdulla Safdar but a youngster Saxena who had accompanied him turned up in Delhi in the late 1950s with a Russian wife. He was on the verge of destitution and the story he narrated was of both Abdulla Safdar and he having spent years in Siberia, separated from each other and under strict surveillance. Mercifully Saxena reached Delhi, but after Roy was dead.

Ruth Fischer's letters to Roy assured him that till the end of their lives his friends in the CPO, Brandler and Thalheimer, had remained loyally concerned about the survival of the Soviet Republic. Brandler at least believed that there was worldwide conspiracy against Soviet Russia, and it was his duty to do everything possible for its survival.

And this was several years after the Comintern had outlived even its borrowed time.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Heinz Neumann, German Communist was sent to China as the Commintern emissary after Roy. He was recalled to Moscow in 1937, then arrested and disappeared.
2. Borodin died in a prison in 1951.
3. All quotations are from M. N. Roy : *Fragments of a Prisoner's Diary ;* Vol. III - *Letters from Jail ;* Indian Renaissance Association, Dehra Dun, 1943.

XIII. Heretic, Not Renegade

M. N. ROY, UNLIKE LENIN, MAO, HO CHI MINH, GANDHI OR Nehru, had no political achievement to his credit. Much cannot be made of his dissenting voice or the wisdom of it, or how subsequent events proved him right. Such vindication is in no way satisfying today. Under the circumstances the best that can be done is to trace the evolution of his ideas, to relate their development to the influences at work, to the countries of his residence, to the people he met and his reading of history. The history of ideas is as important as political and economic development. Ideas represent the conscious element in adaptation. The development of ideas in an individual like M. N. Roy should be as fascinating as for the entire human race or for a nation.

M. N. Roy often argued about ideas being born in a particular social context, but he recognised the limitations of economic determinism. This polarity is present in Marxism itself, and Roy was led to the study of history through acquaintance with Marxism, and later by the compulsions devolving on him as a Marxist theoretician.

We have little on record to indicate as to what were the Marxist texts he read soon after the American radicals had provoked him to examine the basis of the nationalism to which he had subscribed to till his arrival in the U.S.A. He was evidently provoked to read the three volumes of *Capital,* as he mentions in his *Memoirs*. The main U.S. influence on his thought however was his adoption of internationalism and rejection of nationalism as a narrow creed. The stimulus provided by the American radicals may have been amplified later by his realization that the bourgeois democratic revolution could not fulfil itself because it could not break through the habits of mind which had grown in the preceding two centuries of the nation state. Napoleon modernized Europe and spread a great deal of the ideas of the Enlightenment and the French Revolution. But he also provoked nationalism which found aggressive expression in Hohenzollern Germany, and later in Nazism and Italian Fascism.

Jack London's *Martin Eden,* which he read while in America, was probably a seminal book in M. N. Roy's development. In his *Memoirs* he refers to Brandler being the type of the self-educated man idealized in Marxist literature.

I have a lurking suspicion that M. N. Roy became an advocate of industrialization, rather hesitantly. He probably had the Brahmanic contempt of the prosperous parvenu, and of mercantilism. These prejudices might also have prevented his liking the U.S.A.[1] There might have been other personal factors—his being hunted there on behalf of the British Indian Police.[2]

Mexico influenced him in emphasizing that the democratic revolution should precede the Communist, but the bourgeoisie should not be allowed to come to power as they did in France after the revolution.

In Russia he saw how a rapid transition to Communism short-circuiting the democratic stage had led to many problems —particularly to abridgement of freedom. But since he remained discretely silent about Russia till a very late stage a proper analysis of his experience there eludes us.

The Third International was founded because the Second had split itself along "patriotic" lines. Socialist parties' belief that they would bring about a revolution in the metropolitan countries and free the dependencies seemed absurd in 1920. M. N. Roy developed the contrary thesis that revolution in the dependencies would help the metropolitan countries to go communist. The revolutions in backward dependencies could not be other than democratic—the proletariat was small and immature.

But, the democratic revolution could no longer be a repetition of the 18th and 19th century revolutions for the world had advanced and some features of the contemporaneous Russian revolution would have to be incorporated. The motive forces —the energy—for democratic revolution in the dependencies could be supplied by the movements for national liberation and agrarian unrest and the need for land reforms. Care however had to be taken that the democratic revolution was not tied to the leadership of nationalist parties. Asian revolutions had to be different from the Russian as much as from the earlier European revolutions.

This left only one group qualified to lead—the intelligentsia, enlightened and modernized by contact with the ruling imperialism, "nationalist" in the sense of beng opposed to a reversion to feudalism, but transcending the limitations of earlier nationalist movements, taking as helpers massive elements of the population like the peasantry and the working class.

Just as Marx had worked out that industrialization led to increasing socialisation and created conditions favourable for a socialist revolution, M. N. Roy worked out his theory of decolonization. Steady transfer of capital goods from the industrialized countries to the dependencies in payment for raw materials and the setting up of industries was altering the relationship between the two groups of countries. The implication was that forward-looking movements of the intelligentsia could take advantage of the increasingly favourable conditions for them created by "decolonization".

In Weimar Germany, M. N. Roy watched the repeated failure of Socialists and Communists. The political parties were immature lagging far behind the intelligentsia whose main achievements were in literature, science and the arts. But Germany made M. N. Roy realize the importance of a philosophical revolution.

Germany also gave him the idea for an Indian Renaissance. The great flowering of the intellect and creativity in Weimar Germany was the culmination of a process which had started nearly 200 years earlier in the time of Schiller, Wieland, Goethe, Holderlin, Heine and Herder. The German Renaissance was a conscious process. Though Heidelberg and some other cities had been touched by the Renaissance proper through influences received from Italy, France, Britain and Holland the earlier movement had been weak. Most of the energy released by these earlier influences was canalized into religious channels—the Reformation and the subsequent 30 years war between Catholics and Protestants.

Towards the end of the 18th century, German intellectuals set about to usher in a new Renaissance. In this they looked eastwards to the Orient, to India, Persia and China. They argued that the earlier Renaissance had been based on rediscovery and revaluation of Greek and Roman antiquity, but the new German Renaissance sought to be based on the discovery and evaluation of Oriental antiquity. The German intellectuals thereby hoped to catch up with France and Britain.

In Germany there was a noticeable bias for India and Sanskrit. This might have pleased the Indian and the Brahmin in M. N. Roy, but he did not leave it at being flattered. He wanted a similar conscious movement for a Renaissance in India.

He hoped that a political party would bring in the Indian Renaissance. That would be a revolutionary party of the intelligentsia seeking to free itself from British domination while simultaneously freeing the peasantry and the working class from their exploiters. The revolutionary party would usher in a philosophical revolution as a prelude to the political and economic revolution. In the process and in ushering in a Renaissance the party would not be wanting in maturity as the German Socialists and Communists had been, or the Chinese Communist Party.

* * *

It is one of the ironies of Marxist history that the unorthodox have often proved right while the dogmatic have merely been successful. Take the instance of Bernstein, the victim of so much slander and abusive epithets. He did prove right in contending that the proletariat in industrialised countries had lost its revolutionary fervour. So far no industrialised country has gone communist. Those who have, like East Germany and Czechoclovakia, had Communism forced on them through Red Napoleanism. In the instance of Poland, Hungary and Rumania, industrialization followed the Communist occupation and did not precede it.

Roy was unorthodox, as a heretic is expected to be. The distinction between a heretic and a renegade must not be lost sight of. Roy remained broadly and largely loyal to Communism, a defender of what till 1945 was the world's only Communist state, and personally devoted to Stalin, the man who had preserved that state more than anyone else. But he did not subscribe to its dogma.

As we have noticed, the first heresy related to the respective revolutionary roles of the metropolitan and the colonial proletariats. It is possible that Roy's thought was influenced by Thalheimer as well as by Bernstein to some extent, both of whom he met in Berlin before his arrival in Russia; but his originality was in conceiving that colonial populations deserved greater attention than metropolitan proletariats because they were potentially more revolutionary. His article in *Gale's* Magazine in 1919 had indicated the way he was thinking.

According to orthodox socialist thought, and even to the outlook prevailing in the revolutionary Third International the metropolitan proletariat was to liberate itself and the colonial populations. The metropolitan proletariats never liberated themselves, nor did they play any significant role in the colonies. China received sympathy but not much active help from any metropolitan proletariat. The large French Communist Party did not extend much active help to the revolution in Vietnam, except as part of the military campaign against the Japanese occupation in which the American, British and French bourgeoisie were equally active.

On the second heresy, that is the decolonization theory, Roy had collaborators in the CPGB like Rathbone, Clemens Dutt and R. P. Dutt. Though the Brothers Dutt and the Party as a whole abjured the heresy, within 20 years of the Sixth Comintern Congress denunciation India had attained "Dominion Status" as foreseen by Roy, as a compromise between the British and Indian bourgeoisie. The change did not usher in a revolution, but nobody had worked for a revolution--neither the Communist International, nor the CPGB nor the CPI—for none of them had grasped the potentialities of "decolonization".

It is true that export of British capital slowed down after 1924, and virtually ceased in 1930. But the industrial structure was maintained, through the sale to Indian capitalists—the hereditary traders and bankers—of British establishments in India during the Great Depression to meet financial commitments in Britain. The inability to foresee this development was one of the major failures of communist leadership in Russia, Britain and India. One person on whom the blame for lack of foresight cannot be laid was Roy. The difficulty was that historical materialism as understood by communist leadership belonged to the past or a distant future, not the immediate present. The transfer of substantial British capital assets to Indians took place within three years of Kuusinen's denunciation of Roy at the Sixth Congress of the Communist International. Rarely has there been such a dramatic vindication.

The massive sweep of the polls in Britain in 1945 by the Labour Party was the nearest to a revolution that any metropolitan country came to. The Labour Party did initiate decolonization of the British empire—a phenomenon later followed by the Freach too. This might seem a vindication of views popular in the Second International, but already in 1940 Roy decided to support the Allied war effort against the current Indian nationalist and socialist sentiment on the issue and argued that the war would alter the creditor-debtor relationship between Britain and India thereby leading towards termination of British rule in India.

As said earlier Roy did not renege. In 1945 he was enthusiastic about a Labour victory in Britain which to most Communists in India and Russia seemed immaterial in regard to British policy.

Roy had returned to India with two missions: one, to organize a Marxist political revolution under the banner of "Twentieth Century Jacobinism", but second, what he considered to be of greater importance and the basis for a political revolution, to rebuild the cultural foundation of the decayed Indian society on a rational, scientific foundation, the concept of which was basically European. Hence he gave so much importance and emphasis on the Renaissance movement in India as the ground work for a political revolution.

In later years however, his cultural personality reacted sharply to communism as was being practised in Asia and which he dubbed as "nationalism painted red", a phrase he had learned from Lenin. Nevertheless, he considered Communism as a step, even though a very small step, but nontheless a step, towards an ideal which he held high, although it had come to be devoid of the enlightenment of European culture, or in his own words, modernism in social and economic outlook. Years later, speaking at the Political Study camp of the Radical Democratic Party, where he introduced the idea of 'New Orientation' prelude to 'New Humanism', May 8-18, 1946, he said:

> "Let me emphasize on one point: We are not anti-Soviet. We remain as staunch defenders and friends of the Soviet Union as we have ever been ....So about Communism. We are not anti-Communist. We are not going to carry on propaganda against Communism".[2]

In a letter to Ruth Fischer on 23rd October 1949, Roy further wrote:

> "We cannot disown a spititual kinship with the Communists, notwithstanding all their stupidities and misdeeds.... having spent a life-time in quest of economic equality, real political freedom and social justice, one cannot but be

> suffocated in the atmosphere of big-bellied bravados and square-jawed vulgarity. Was Marx a fool or a malicious liar when he exposed the hypocrisy of the bourgeois society and the unreality of freedom under parliamentary democracy?"

And later, refusing to join the Congress for Cultural Freedom, when an emissary from Ruth Fischer approached him, he wrote to Ruth on 31st March 1951:

> "The purpose of the Congress for Cultural Freedom, which is organized under the auspices of the International Committee, set up by the Berlin Congress, is to prepare the ground for the change in India's foreign policy by mobilising opinion against 'neutralism'......It is an open secret that big business and right-wing political opinion (which prevails in the Congress Party—sic) disapproves of Nehru's foreign policy and wants India to line up with America unequivocally."

Earlier, on 23rd October 1949, he wrote to her:

> "....And American plans of building in India an industrial base for the coming war against Russia will most probably save India--not for democracy, but for fascism...... American free enterprise is not the alternative to Communism."

In the wake of the Korean war, Roy wrote a series of articles on the character of Communism in Asia. While strongly criticizing U.S. and U.N. intervention in Korea, Roy did not fail to point out that Asian Communism was "nationalism painted red." He wrote in *The Radical Humanist*:

> "Asian Communism is nationalism painted red; the means becomes the end. The new tactic of revolution is to convert colonial nationalism into a spurious brand of Communism".[3]

Elaborating on this point, he later wrote:

> "The educated middle class constitutes the driving force as well as the social mainstay of Communism in Asia. They play the leading part, with the masses providing the background and singing the chorus. Their main passion is

> anti-imperialism, which in the last analysis is racial animosity and....implies rejection of the values of modern civilisation".[4]

Commenting on Roy's article, the reputed political analyst, Guy Wint, wrote in a rejoinder, captioned, "An Indian Prophet" :

> "It is this spurious and nihilistic brand of national Communism which fills Roy with so much apprehension. He (Roy) says that it will be a revival of Oriental Despotism with a thin veneer of modernism, desfigured by xenophobia, brutality and violence".[5]

As an orthodox Marxist, Roy did believe in the liberating and progressive role of European civilization. On September 5, 1951, he wrote to Ruth Fischer :

> "I am of the opinion that, if Europe goes down, there is no hope. And a Europe converted to the American way of life will be worse than Stalin's Russia".

He also hoped that the old guards of International brotherhood, the Communist International, would reintegrate and pave the foundation for a new world, the world he and his brotherhood had dreamed. On October 23, 1949, he wrote to Ruth Fischer :

> "Your report, that there is process of reintegration of the scattered ranks of the old brotherhood, is a solace. Let us not take part in this mad race for power; and we can only be camp-followers. The clash is inevitable; I am not sure the Russians will not be the last to laugh; and that may not be the worst. In any case, after the screen has dropped on the 5th Act of the tragedy, something new will have to be built out of the ruins. We shall not be there; but we can see to it that the germs of the tradition of liberty are not destroyed. We shall devote ourselves to the quiet task of 'building cases', as Koestler says, or maintain 'islands of civilisation' in the midst of the surging sea of barbarism, as Bertrand Russell says. Already fifteen years ago, while in prison, I came to the conclusion that civilised mankind was destined to go through another period of monasticism, where all the treasures of

past wisdom, knowledge and learning will be rescued from the ruins to be nurtured and then passed on to a new generation engaged in the task of building a new world and a new civilisation".

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. In a letter to the author, on June 4, 1979, late Prof. Richard L. Park wrote : "He (Roy) did not like most Americans, despite the fact that he married two !"

2. New Orientation : M. N. Roy's Lectures at the Political Study Camp, 8-18 May 1946 ; Renaissance Publishers, Calcutta, December 1946 ; pp. 68-9.

3. M. N. Roy's article "Democracy and Nationalism in Asia" in *The Radical Humanist*, dated June 15, 1952

4. *The Radical Humanist*, June 15, 1952

5. *The Radical Humanist*, June 15, 1952

Evelyn Trent as a student of Stanford University in 1915

Evelyn Roy in Moscow
(Courtesy : Chinmohan Sehanobis)

Evelyn Trent as Moderator of
World News of San Francisco
Chronicle in 1928

XIV. Evelyn Trent (1892-1970)

NO ACCOUNT OF ROY'S YEARS ABROAD CAN BE COMPLETE without a study of his relationship with Evelyn Trent, who was his wife and collaborator from 1916 to 1925. The relationship lasted nine years, the couple living for various periods in the U.S.A., Mexico, Russia, Germany and France. Roy, in his otherwise detailed *Memoirs* covering most of that period, does not mention her even once. Evelyn, since she parted from him in 1925, also never wrote about him though she outlived him by 16 years.

In 1955, Ellen (M. N. Roy's second wife) visited the U. S. A. and called on Evelyn with Professor Richard L. Park. By that time Roy had been dead one year, but Evelyn would not permit Prof. Park to photograph the two women together.[1]

Another investigator saw Tayab Shaikh,[2] one of Roy's prominent associates and the first biographer of Roy, who had known him in Berlin, but Shaikh, then in London, refused to answer any question. Shaikh's relationship with Ellen, whom Roy married after his release from jail in India in 1937, were tenuous throughout the period 1937-45, the first being the year of Ellen's arrival in India and the second the year of Shaikh's leaving his country in a self-imposed exile from which he never returned. In 1945, Shaikh had gone to San Francisco as Roy's personal emissary to the inaugural session of the United Nations. This assignment occurred after five years of personal estrangement between Roy and Shaikh, but no information is available whether Shaikh had met Evelyn or if Evelyn had talked to him.

To tear this veil of reticence, to come to a close approximation to the relationship between Evelyn and M. N. is a difficult task, and much must be left unsaid unless one was to essay into conjectures. What I would attempt here is a plausible reconstruction.

As the wife of M. N. Roy, Evelyn was among founders of two Communist Parties outside Russia : the Mexican Communist Party in 1919 and the emigre Communist Party of India in 1920. Under the assumed Indian name, Santi Devi, she was a contributor to *Inprecor,* the journal published by the Communists International. It was a *nom de plume* which also appeared as a signatory of *An Indian Communist Manifesto* issued from Berlin in 1920. With M. N. Roy, she also jointly authored a book on Indian politics, *One Year of Non-Co-operation from Ahmedabad to Gaya* (1923).

Touchingly the *nom de plume,* Santi Devi that she adopted in Berlin in 1920, appeared in parenthesis below her signature in a letter that Evelyn wrote to the editor of *The Radical Humanist,* almost 30 years after her separation from M. N. Roy, in 1954, as if to ensure recognition.[3] And she wrote to say that she had heard of Roy's death and expressed her heartfelt condolences.

There were reasons for her to entertain doubts about Evelyn T. Jones being identified as Roy's first wife because between 1925 and 1954 there had been no contact between her and the Royists in India. She had also cut herself off from the Communist Party of India (much to the dismay of one of its founding leaders on Indian soil, Muzaffar Ahmad[4]), and had kept herself aloof from the international communist movement.

* * *

M. N. Roy, then Naren Bhattacharya, arrived in San Francisco in the middle of June 1916. On the following day he went to Stanford and became the guest of Dhangopal Mukherji, brother of fellow-revolutionary, Jadugopal. Dhangopal's circle was literary and aesthetic, probably consisting of young Americans attracted towards India because of the distant influence of New England transcendentalists who put much store by Indian philosophy. It included his American wife (a niece of Eamon de Valera, the U. S. born Irish leader who became Prime Minister of Ireland in 1932 and later its President), who "refused to go into a Stanford sorority because Blacks, Jews and Quakers were not admitted".[5]

Stanford, with the Pacifist Dr. David Starr Jordan as its Chancellor in 1916, was striving to build a consmopolitan culture. The points of departure were racism and superficiality, or better still, the phillistinism of the 'Gold Rush' culture. Two ways were open : creativity in the European tradition since the Renaissance, or widening it to make it less exclusive and more passionate about social justice. Here was a young culture—the Californian was young even by American standards—seeking moorings and contacts in an older culture, and yet being rebelliously cosmopolitan.

Evelyn would not be phillistine at 24, and was seeking a break-through into a richer life. At that time Roy came into her life : tall, dark and handsome, a persecuted nationalist, a fugitive from British imperialism, he was definitely from beyond her world, and for her, an escape from Californian provincialism. According to one account, when she first met Roy through Mrs. Dhangopal Mukherjee, she felt "he was like a new Saint trying to liberate mankind".

Evelyn's side of the story is simpler ; not Roy's. Though approaching 30, he had not till then found any woman interesting enough, nor had he allowed himself to be induced to marry. Roy was definitely of a monastic turn of mind ; though in his *Memoirs* he describes himself as being puritanic. Evelyn must have been different from the women Roy had known before. She accompanied him to Los Angeles and then to New York, where they lived together for sometime. It was she who introduced him to the bohemia in Greenwich Village. Then she accompanied him to Mexico, where he finally dropped his monastic homespun.

In Mexico, the American wife's outbursts, rather extensively reported in Roy's *Memoirs* could not have been addressed to Roy. "She did not marry an enemy alien, they married before America joined the war ; she could not divorce the man she loved because a German submarine had sunk an American ship". They were addressed to a fellow American, Evelyn. "Why did not Evelyn was also the bridge between Roy and the expatriate the American government join the war a few months earlier ?"[6] American Radicals in Mexico, most of whom belonged to Greenwich Village.

What induced Evelyn to follow Roy to Moscow ? It is a pity that Evelyn did not write or talk about Roy, for therein probably lies the narration of a tragedy, not the sad story of the estrangement between Evelyn and Roy but how the Russian revolution failed humanity. Roy refused to admit this failure till 1946. Even after the second world war—when he thought the threat to the first socialist state had been removed—he was circumspect because of a lurking fear that his words could be used for propaganda.

Evelyn went to Moscow because communism promised a freer world, unlike Roy (the presumption is mine) that revolutionary Russia could also free India. Therein probably lies the seed of Evelyn's and Roy's later estrangement. Evelyn was not condemned to be a nationalist ; Roy could not help containing within his cosmopolitanism a residue of his earlier nationalism.[7]

Russia more than the U.S.A. or Scandinavia held world attention in the field of arts in the first decade of the present century. In theatre, ballet, music and painting it was giving to the global culture a great deal of material originally received from the West but wholly transformed into something new and vital. The majority of the more important names were Russian : Tolstoy and Chekov, Stanislavsky, Diaghilev, Stravinsky and Borodin, Nijinsky and Chagall. The American Henry James seemed a rather lonely figure. But the Americans had set themselves the task of ending their provincialism. In 1913 the Armory Exhibition showed the work of 20th Century European painters at New York, Chicago and Boston. Culturally, America wanted not only to be part of the contemporary world, but to greedily acquire a global heritage.

Evelyn Trent grew up in this atmosphere. It was natural for her to find the wide world attractive instead of looking forward to a parochial married life, sedate and secure. Roy might have seemed to her adventure personified. And he did give her an adventurous life. She might have felt like espousing a cause in loving him. Greenwich Village and its bohemianism and endless debates were much more exciting, probably more extreme, than the campus radicalism at Stanford. She accompanied Roy to Mexico where a number of Pacifists and Radicals had taken refuge. We can presume Evelyn too was happy to be with her husband in the "small cosmopolitan community of free human beings"—Roy's words—which had grown up in Mexico city through intercourse between Mexican intellectuals and the expatriate American radicals. The nostalgia with which Roy describes the Mexican days in his *Memoirs* (22 chapters) tells us that they were indeed happy days. And if they were happy for him, they must have been happy for her too.

Evelyn and Roy travelled to Moscow across war-ravaged Europe from December 1919 to April 1920 under assumed Mexican names and with Mexican diplomate passports. We have a vivid description of her presence at the Second Congress of the Communist International in Victor Serge's *Memoirs of a Revolutionary*: "From India, by way of Mexico, we had the pock-marked Manabendra Nath Roy: very tall, very handsome, very dark with very wavy hair; he was accompanied by a statuesque Anglo-Saxon woman who appeared naked beneath her flimsy dress". Serge's description bears out two things about Evelyn—that she had a fine figure, and that she did not care for Edwardian inhibitions in matters of dress.

Had she gone to Moscow hoping that the inhibitions would be weaker in a communist society? It was just before she arrived in Moscow that she adopted the *nom de plume* Santi Devi, and was a signatory to *An Indian Communist Manifesto* which was issued from Berlin prior to their departure for Moscow.

Evelyn went to Tashkent while civil war still raged in that part of central Asia ; and there she was one of the seven founding members of the emigre Communist Party of India in October 1920. In the Spring of 1921 the Roys moved to Moscow, and Evelyn took up teaching at the Communist University of the Toilers of the East. Ernestine Evans wrote of visiting a class in the winter of 1921-22 where she had 18 Indian pupils. At the same University, though possibly not directly a pupil of the Roys, was a Vietnamese who was later to distinguish himself as Ho Chi Minh.

Lots of artists and intellectuals in Europe and America hoped that a communist revolution would free the artist of his dependence upon the market economy and its prejudices. So they had welcomed the Russian revolution. For a time with Lunacharsky as the Commisser for Education, Soviet Russia did seem to fulfill the expectation. Lunacharsky appointed Chagall the Commissar director of the Vitebsk Art School. Cubists-Purists, who constituted the *avant garde* in 1918, but were called Constructivists in Russia, were given state assignments. Isadora Duncan and Paul Robeson made pilgrimages to Russia. Evelyn was temperamentally unfitted to be a pilgrim ; on arrival she might have thought that she was in a regime where art and the artist's freedom were respected. But Evelyn's arrival in Russia coincided with the end of this tundra summer.

In 1920 the Constructivists fell from favour when Lenin clamped down a taboo on all forms of aesthetic, expressionist and abstract painting as incomprehensible to the masses. Abstract painting was a Russian contribution to global culture but this "other (the aesthetic) Russian Revolution" was disowned in the country of its own birth, even after a political, social and ideological revolution. Lenin ordered encouragement to those willing to paint popular, descriptive and narrative pictures within the familiar experience of the masses. Chagall, instructed to confine himself within the comprehension of peasants, resigned the Vitebsk job and moved to work on decor and sets of the

Jewish theatre in Moscow where he expected a more sophisticated audience. Chagall's stay in Moscow was transitory. In 1923 both he and Kandinsky moved to Paris, to the cultural capital of the bourgeois world which they had known before and found unsatisfactory, but not as disillusioning as communist Russia. They became part of an exodus—of Diaghilev and Nijinsky, of Stravinsky and Roerich to mention some of the more famous. Ironically, right through the 'Gay Twenties' the Cubist-Purists, the Functionalists and the Surrealists were described in Western Europe as "Bolshevik" artists.

Evelyn was fond of the arts and the artists. The Mexican revolution of 1911 had released artistic energy, and a whole lot of new artists came up. Diego Rivera drew close to communism when the Roys were there and frequently visited them. Later he attended the 1927 conference of the League Against Imperialism. In Berlin, Evelyn was often seen in the company of the communist painter, Kaethe Kollwitz. While aesthetic freedom was being restrained in Russia, fortunately for Evelyn, the Roys had to move to Berlin in 1922. The Weimer regime in Germany was both more democratic and enlightened than the regime in Russia. The intellectual climate was more hospitable too. Max Reinhardt as a theatre producer and Walter Gropius as the leader of the Baahaus Design Centre, the painters Klee and Kandinsky and the writing Mann brothers determined it. The communist fringe was strong and important.

The Roys were happy to be in the minority which strove after aesthetic, social and political freedom. They had a communist painter in Kaethe Kollwitz, a communist film actress in Erna Morena, a communist journalist in her husband Wilhelm Herzog and intellectuals like Paul Levy, August Thalheimer and Eduard Fuchs. The Roys may not have realised this then, but they enjoyed their stay in Berlin. Their home in Berlin became a rendezvous—Borodin dropping in on the outward and return journeys, as did Louis Fraina[8] and his wife Esther. As Esther wrote later : in Berlin she spent much of her free time with Borodin and the Roys.[9]

After their expulsion from Germany the Roys moved to Paris in January 1924, which had regained its position as the world's capital in matters artistic. This Parisian recovery of eminence owed much to the emergence of Ozenfant, Jeanneret (Le Corbusier) and Andre Breton as leaders of the *avant garde.* At Paris, a colonial bureau of the Comintern and a foreign bureau of the CPI were established. The burden of the work of running the unit was shared between Evelyn and an Indian, Mohammed Sepassi. She also took charge of Roy's journal, *The Masses.* Both Evelyn and Roy were arrested in Paris on January 30, 1925 but Evelyn was released and allowed to stay on in France, while Roy was deported to Luxembourg.

Evelyn was able to organize in Paris the *Comite Pro-Hindou,* which was joined by a number of French intellectuals. Henri Barbusse became the General Secretary. Barbusse's was also the cover address for Roy; and according to British Intelligence reports of that period "the discovery that Roy was constantly visiting the office of the *Comite Pro-Hindou* led to the arrest of himself and his wife". The Comite was prevented from functioning and "thenceforth Mrs. Roy's group in Paris carried on propaganda mainly through the medium of the *Masses of India*" (which succeeded the *Masses*). M. N. Roy and Evelyn were together—on available evidence—for the last time at the Amsterdam conference, called by the Communist Party of Great Britain (CPGB) to discuss policy about India, on July 11 and 12, 1925. After the conference, according to British Intelligence, Evelyn paid her first visit to America in eight years. M. N. Roy went back to Moscow.

The shift to Paris at the beginning of 1924 also lends itself to be seen as a recourse to put as much distance as possible between themselves (the Roys) and the Indian nationalists in Berlin. The move misfired. As Roy wrote later, he "did not like Paris when he went there". Once in 1922 Evelyn went to Berlin as Roy's emissary to negotiate with the nationalists. The encounter was as unpleasant as her earlier meeting with Chakravarty in New York narrated by Lajpat Rai and referred in page 41 of this book.

Roy may not have liked Paris but it was there that the "Bolshevik" artists were making interesting experiments which they were not allowed in Soviet Russia. The association of Marxism with *avant garde* art started weakening after 1924, when Freud (whose *Totem and Taboo,* published in 1913, had not made much impression during the war years) became increasingly more attractive to artists and conducively relevant to creativity.

An American political scientist, David N. Druhe has written in his book, *Soviet Russia and Indian Communism,* that M. N. Roy divorced Evelyn when it was reported by Farouki, an Indian agent of the Russian Secret Service in Berlin, that she was a British spy. It is quite likely that the allegation was made, and not dismissed outright in Moscow. There is no definite information on the subject but even if there was the faintest hint of the allegation having been entertained in Moscow, Evelyn as a self-respecting person would not go there. And she seems not to have gone there.

Muzaffar Ahmad, refers to Druhe's book in his, *Myself and the Communist Party of India* as well as Druhe's quotation from a book written by a defecting Russian, Georgi Agabekov, titled *The Russian Secret Terror.* This defector claimed to have been the chief of the eastern sector of the OGPU. The Agabekov passage quoted by Ahmad is: "The first intimation of the bad faith of the Indian Communist Roy came through Farouki. He suggested that Roy's wife being an English woman, might be an English spy. When the suspicion was confirmed, Roy was separated from all political activity". What is significant is Ahmad's observation that "there is not the slightest doubt that Farouki had met the Indian nationalist revolutionaries in Berlin and it was they who made Farouki send this report and persistently propagated this lie." Ahmad added: "So often did I hear Dr. Bhupendranath Datta say this after his return to India in 1925 that I came to learn by rote that Evelyn was a British woman and British agent".[10] Neither Farouki nor Datta could have been well acquainted with her or they would have known that she was American.

Here we have a situation in which individual hopes, national identities and ideological aspirations are in an unsortable mess. Soviet Russia might have seemed to promise in 1920 more freedom for the artist, if not individual, than Evelyn's own country, but no longer in 1925. Indians might have been seen a deserving group to dedicate one's life to the cause of their freedom till 1922 but their squabbles over money, rivalries and suspicions would have induced any sensitive person to avoid them after three years of contact. Moreover, when one's own bonafides can be suspected the least that a decent person can do is to withdraw. Evelyn must have been feeling disappointed in Soviet Russia, disgusted with Indian revolutionries and hurt over her integrity being suspect among those whose cause she made her own. But M. N. Roy was committed to both Soviet Russia as well as Indians, and for the first time in 1925 Roy suggested to Stalin that he returned to India. The request was refused. It was a difficult situation for which the two found the only possible rational solution—separation and divorce without any recrimination or remonstration. None heard either of them recriminate or remonstrate.

Then, in the earlier part of 1954 she wrote the letter to the editor of *The Radical Humanist* mentioned earlier that she had learnt of Roy's death (which occured on January 25, 1954) and seen *The Radical Humanist's* "beautiful and touching Memorial Number". She had also come to know that *The Radical Humanist* had been publishing in instalments since 1953 Roy's *Memoirs* and she sent in subscription for the back issues, "as I wish to have all the instalments from beginning to end." She also ordered the despatch to her of all commemorative booklets published since Roy's death, "including the Photographic Album", and his books published after Roy's return to India including *Fragments of a Prisoner's Diary,* Vols. 1 & 2. The letter concluded with an expression of profound sympathy to "all members of the Radical Humanist family"—a phrase very close to Roy's utterances about the nature of the political party or ideological group he had founded.

The next letter from Evelyn to *The Radical Humanist* came in September 1962. It contained a significant sentence: "I was sorry to read of Ellen Roy's untimely death and wonder if the motive for the crime has ever been resolved". It harkened back to the Comintern days because like Trotsky, Ellen had been hammered to death. Evelyn told the Radical family—I sometimes wonder if she felt as if belonging to it—that she was retiring from "the work that engaged me and will have more time in the future, I hope, for reading and productive activity". Her second letter contained a request for a copy of Roy's letters from jail "or what was called I believe, Diary of a Cat". (The book she refers to is *Memoirs of a Cat* written by Roy in jail). In her eagerness to read Roy's non-political writings one can discern an anxiety to know if Roy remembered her. She must have been disappointed.

Evelyn returned to America a "sad and broken-hearted" woman, according to her nephew, whom I met in 1982. "She lived in this house with my mother, who was the only member of the Trent family to share her attitude to life", he said. He recalled that Charles Trent, Evelyn's father, had come to America in 1860s as a cabin boy, studied mining engineering and settled at Auburn to work at the first gold mine discovered at Coloma, 19 miles from Auburn. Evelyn was the youngest of eight children and a *phi beta kappa* scholar at Stanford, he proudly mentioned. She was a radical from her younger days, against the Establishment, as was his mother. Hence the two sisters were fond of each other. "It was here in this house that Evelyn also lived before she left for New York and then Mexico with Manabendra Nath Roy". He pronounced the full name every time with sentimental attachment. "Manabendra Nath Roy" he said "had visted this house." "When 'Aunti Bam'" as he affectionately called her, "fell in love with Manabendra Nath Roy, nobody in the Trent family liked it, my mother was the sole exception. She gave her all the love and sympathy she needed then and later when she returned from Europe a heart-broken woman, around 1926".[11] Yet, Evelyn seems to have remained active and, according to British Intelligence, her return "seems to have given a fillip to the moribund (Ghadr) movement" in California. About this further information is lacking.

In 1927-28, Evelyn began to write a column for the *San Francisco Chronicle* on International Affairs. The column was discontinued after about seven months because the then editor of the Chronicle, Mr. Tufts, did not agree with her views. It may be recalled that in 1927 international attention was focussed on China where M. N. Roy, as the special representative of the Comintern, was trying to organize a communist revolution.

Evelyn seems to have waited for a call from Roy. On Roy's arrest in India in July 1931, she wrote a protest article in the *Revolutionary Age,* published from New York, dated November 28, 1931 and used the initials "E.R." The article, dated October 31, 1931 and captioned "M. N. Roy and Indian Communism" highlighted protests by Henri Barbusse and the scientist, Albert Einstein, with both of whom Evelyn was known to be friendly. The article quoted a letter from Roy written from Kanpur jail in India, and one which has not been carried in the *Letters from Jail,* that Roy wrote to Ellen and were later published from India. Was Roy still writing to Evelyn in 1931? Did Evelyn expect a reunion with Roy? She did not marry for the second time until after Roy married Ellen Gottschalk in 1937. Evelyn married DeWitt Jones around 1940, according to her nephew.

Prof. Robert C. North of Stanford University, who interviewed Evelyn often, wrote to me on March 30, 1981 that "she (Evelyn) suggested several times that perhaps someday she would tell me more (about her life with Roy) but 'someday' never came. I heard indirectly that she had left me some letters or papers, but I never received any, nor have I obtained any satisfaction from enquiries. I do not know what happened to them, or if she had any". I was however told by two of her niecess, both living in Sacramento, that all the books and writings left by Evelyn were sent to Prof. Robert North at Stanford in a box after her death which occurred on November

21, 1970. DeWitt Jones had predeceased her on February 20, 1949. They had no children.

It may be recalled that a copy of M. N. Roy's "Report on China", submitted to the Comintern soon after his return from China in 1927 and published only in Russian by the (Soviet) State Publishing Department in 1929 was found in the Hoover Library at Stanford and another copy at the University of California at Berkeley only after Roy's death, which has gone a long way in vindicating Roy's position in the abortive Chinese revolution of 1927 This had remained untraced for almost three decades. Nobody knows how it came to the Library. Perhaps someday Evelyn's papers will be similarly found from a remote corner of Stanford University. If and when these papers are found they could add a touch of drama to a long separation and the enigma of Evelyn Trent Roy Jones, alias Santi Devi, may unfold itself.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Prof. Richard L. Park's letter to me dated June 4, 1979
2. Tayab Shaikh's book is titled *The Man Who Looked Ahead.* Shaikh used a pseudonym, A. K. Hindi, as author. The book was published from Allahabad in 1938.
3. The letter written on May 13, 1954 was however not published in *The Radical Humanist.*
4. Muzaffar Ahmad, *Myself and the Communist Party of India, 1920-29*; Calcutta, 1970; pp. 485-7.
5. Letter of Dhangopal Mukherji Jr to the author.
6. Roy *Memoirs,* p. 84
7. Prof. Park's letter to me dated June 4, 1979
8. Louis Fraina was General Secretary of the American Socialist Party in 1918 when he founded the journal, *Revolutionary Age* in Boston. At that time, and for a short period thereafter, Fraina was the leading theoretical and political figure of the Socialist Left and of the early communist movement. He was an important member of the

American delegation to the Third (Communist) International in 1920. As a result of difficulties that were in part personal and accidental, he disappeared from the scene for a number of years. He re-emerged in the 1930s as Lewis Corey.

9. Esther Corey's article, "Passage to Russia, II" in *Survey*, A Journal of Soviet and East European Studies ; No. 55, April 1965 ; p. 111.

10. Muzaffar Ahmad, Op. Cit., p. 487.

11. Evelyn's nephew, whom I interviewed, preferred to remain anonymous.

APPENDIX I

ARREST AND TRIAL OF M. N. ROY IN INDIA

(Extracts from *The Statesman* reports)

The Statesman, Wednesday, July 22, 1931

M. N. ROY FOUND IN BOMBAY

M. N. Roy, the Indian revolutionary and Communist, alleged to have conspired with other revolutionaries in Russia to foment rebellion in India, subsequently being expelled from the Communist International in Moscow and going to Germany, was arrested in Bombay early yesterday morning.

Wanted since 1924 on a charge of waging war against the King, it was known some time ago that Roy had contrived to return to India and that he was in hiding.

Following his arrest, T. A. Shaikh, Secretary of the Bombay branch of the All India Trade Union Congress, Dr M. R. Shetty, Sunder Kabadi, Charles Mascarenhas and five others were also taken into custody.

The Statesman, July 23, 1931

ARREST ELUDED FOR SEVEN YEARS

M. N. ROY's CAREER

WANTED BY POLICE SINCE 1921

(from our Correspondent)

Bombay, *July* 22 :

Since the arrest in Bombay of M. N. Roy, reported in yesterday's *The Statesman,* it is now possible to have a closer insight into his movement from the date of his arrival in India some months ago until his arrest on Tuesday morning. His amazing elusiveness when arrest seemed almost certain baffled the police and the detectives all over India.

Until the Bombay Police Commissioner and Khan Bahadur Pettigara entered the room where Roy was sleeping at Wylie Street on Tuesday morning he had outwitted the police of many other cities of India on numerous occasions. Nor had any Police Officer, not even the CID experts, ever been so near to arresting Roy as a Bombay police party some time ago. They had tracked him to a certain house, surrounding it, and entered it, but only to discover to their chagrin that their man had escaped by a back entrance, through another house.

Seldom had the police of India ever strained and worked so feverishly to get at a 'wanted' man as they have in the case of Roy, whom they have been hunting since he landed in India under an assumed name and with a faked passport. Yet they knew that Roy had come to the country from Germany and was somewhere in north India. Cities were combed, likely suspects detained and subsequently allowed to go—all in a desparate endeavour to arrest a man who was known to be wanted for years but who never gave his pursuers a chance to get within reach of him, so cleverly did he outwit them.

Seldom, if ever, in the brief two months (it was in fact seven months but the police probably did not get the information correctly—SR) since his arrival in this country did he sleep twice in the same place without making absolutely certain of the safety of doing so. Scores of assumed names and various disguises were adopted by Roy in evading arrest while in the country. It is said that he visited over two dozen cities in India during this time and dodge the police of the district in each case.

Accounts of Roy's numerous escapades when on the verge of arrest would fill columns, but some of the most exciting are given here. But for his amazing cunning, Roy would have been in custody within a week of his arrival. Though he arrived under an assumed passport and probably in disguise the CID in Bombay and other places got to know of it, but when they went to lay their hands on him he had vanished. He was known to have visited Bombay on several occasions, but each time he eluded capture. After travelling all over the United Provinces, he is said to have visited Karachi, where he is alleged to have attended the last session of the National Congress in disguise.

Narrow Escapes

In other places, too, Roy narrowly escaped arrest. In Bombay he was actually to enter the bungalow of a "rich and respectable citizen" at Pedder Road in a motor car one night a week ago. A party of detectives followed in another car a short distance behind. As soon as the car in which Roy was seen to enter the place had stopped the police car drove up and the officers carefully outlined their plan of entrance. Some of them were detained to watch the gate while others were to go into the house. The latter went inside and waited, but meanwhile watchers outside the gate saw a car emerge from the gate of an adjoining bungalow and drive off quite normally. Only after the "raiding" party arrived did the others realize that the man they were looking for had been in that car which they had seen drive out from the other house. Roy had evidently escaped through the first house over the way adjoining the two houses and got to the other car. Once more Roy had beaten off his pursuers.

On another occasion while he was staying in a building in Bombay, Roy was seen to enter the building and ascend the staircase. Police Officers followed him, but despite a vigorous search of the room where Roy was known to have entered he could not be found. He had again used a back entrance as a means of convenient exist.

Even till Monday night the Bombay police and C.I.D. were not absolutely certain of getting their man. When it was known that he had arrived in the flat at Wylie Street that night elaborate plans were made. Three of the smart C.I.D. constables were disguised and slept on the pavement opposite the flat. The night was wet but the men stuck to their post and kept watch.

At about midnight, Roy was seen to enter the house. Immediately, a telephone message was sent through to Khan Bahadur Pettigara, and he and the Police Commissioner accompanied by Inspector Desai, arrived sometime after. After making certain that Roy was asleep, they entered the flat and successfully arrested a man whom scores of their Police Officers had failed to arrest on previous occasions.

The whole plan was worked out to perfection to the minutest details.

Roy is said to have been seen with a German lady (Lou Gessler—SR) whom he met in Europe and who visited him while he was staying in Bombay before his arrest. She is believed to be somewhere in Northern India at present.

M. N. ROY'S TRIAL

The Statesman. September 1, 1931

TRIAL OF M. N. ROY BEGINS

Accused Applies For Visit To Meerut

Cawnpore, *August* 31 :

The trial of M. N. Roy, who has been charged with waging war against the King Emperor under Section 121A of I.P.C. opened this morning before Mr. Lewis Lloyd, Joint Magistrate.

Mr. Asaf Ali of Delhi Bar, assisted by the advocate of the local Bar, appeared for Roy.

The first witness proved the sanction granted under the signature of Mr. H. W. Emerson, Secretary to the Home Department, Government of India, sanctioning the prosecution.

The next witness examined was Khan Bahadur Kavasji Jamshedji Petigara, Dy. Commissioner of Police in-Charge of C.I.D. at Bombay. He deposed that he arrested Roy in the house of A. G. Pandit in Wylie Road, Bombay in the early hours of the morning of July 21.

The third witness was Sir Cecil Kaye, who was the Director of the C.I.D. of Government of India from 1921 to 1924. He proved the complaint filed on March 1, 1924 (in the Cawnpore Conspiracy case) and his signature thereon. He said that he filed it under orders of the Home Member (Sir James

Crerar). He received information regarding the 1924 complain in 1921 or 1922 winter. In consequence of this information he gave instructions to the various intelligence bureaus to intercept the letters of various persons and also under the Sea Custom Act to intercept literature and publications brought to India from abroad.

He also proved certain intercepted letters with Moscow date marks and other letters in possession of (Shaukat) Usmani, an accused in the 1924 case.

Immediately after the Court resumed its sitting after lunch, Mr. Asaf Ali put in an application that the accused Roy should be taken in custody to Meerut jail so that he might consult those who were alleged to be conspirators along with him. After some arguments the matter was postponed for further consideration.

The examination of Sir Cecil Kaye was resumed. He gave a lengthy account of the documents in English and Bengali handled by him in connection with the trial of the Communists in 1924.

The witness was then shown various exhibits said to be letters under the name of Roy to Dange, the late C. R. Das, Jamal Ahmed, Jewanlal Kapur and others; some copies of *Vanguard, Advance Guard,* memoranda issued to the working class party in India, the manifesto regarding the conference of workers as well as resolutions expressing lack of confidence in Abani Mukherjee, letters addressed to M. Zinoviev and various photographs put in by the prosecution and proved them as documents filed by him in 1924.

Another application was filed by the Defense Counsel seeking facilities for the accused in respect of interviews, writing letters, reading newspapers etc. in the same manner as was given to the Meerut prisoners.

The Court then rose for the day.

Statesman, 2nd September, 1931

ROY'S APPLICATION REJECTED : "IMPRACTICAL"

The trial of M. N. Roy was resumed today. Sir Cecil Kaye was further examined. The Court rejected Roy's application for being taken to Meerut to consult the prisoners there.

Sir Cecil Kaye proved a large number of exhibits which purported to be letters addressed by or to Roy by various persons in India and abroad regarding People's Publicity Service and Bureau of International Press and other correspondence with Dange, Usmani and others, including some foreign names, figure prominently in these letters. The letters were sent from or to Berlin, Amsterdam, Bombay, Calcutta and Cawnpore.

Sir Cecil explained that the letters R.I.L.U. stood for Red International Labour Union and E.C.C.I. for the Executive Committee of the Communist International. The letters generally began as "Dear Comrade" and were enclosed in covers, addressed to some foreign names. The inner cover gave the name "Roy" and others, prominently mentioned. Some photographs of the letters in English and Hindi were produced and proved by the witness. Copies of *Vanguard* containing Singaravelu Chettiar's article on the Gaya Congress and "An Appeal to the late C. R. Das and his followers" were also proved, as well as pamphlets and books entitled "What do we Want", "India's Problems", "India in Transition", "One Year of Non-Cooperation", all by Roy. Some of these books have been published by the Communist Party and others in foreign countries. Sir Cecil Kaye was cross-examined by Mr. Asaf Ali.

No other witness being present, Roy's application for being taken or sent to Meerut to hold consultations with Dange, Usmani and others were taken up and rejected.

His (Roy's) other application for providing similar facilities as provided to the Meerut Conspiracy case prisoners was referred to jail authorities.

The case was adjourned till tomorrow.

The Statesman, Sep 3, 1931

M. N. ROY'S PLEA

Leave to Address Court Rejected

Cawnpore, Sep 2 :

Roy applies for permission to address the Court as he was not satisfied with the method adopted by the Court. The Magistrate disallows Roy's request.

Roy wanted to make a statement regarding rejection of his application for being sent to Meerut to consult the prisoners there. The Magistrate remarked it was open to Roy to appeal to the Sessions Court, if he was not satisfied with the procedure. Court refused his repeated request to address the Court personally on points which his Counsel would not be speaking on, and proceeded with the trial.

Gupta's Antecedents

Mr. Kiron Behari Roy was the last witness of the day. He is Asst. Accountant of the Calcutta Port Trust and a friend of Nalini Gupta, an accused in the 1924 case. He said he met Gupta in 1909 in Calcutta when he was a student. He met him again in Glasgow where Gupta was studying engineering. They stayed together for about eight months when Gupta left for London.

He further stated that he met Gupta again in 1922 or 1923 in Bombay when Gupta stayed with him. Asked by the Public Prosecutor, Kiron Roy said they mostly talked about old friends and old times and that he had no idea that Gupta was in anyway connected with any kind of conspiracy, or was in league with M. N. Roy or the Soviet (Russia). When leaving Bombay, Gupta told him he was expecting some letters and money orders. Two letters were received by him at his office, addressed to him, each containing a cover meant for Gupta. These were sent to one Dr. Roy of Wellington Street, Calcutta, who was their mutural friend for delivery to Gupta. Subsequently a money order for Rs. 368-12-0 also addressed to the witness and meant for Gupta was received.

Soon after Gupta left, the Police enquired from the witness regarding Gupta's whereabouts and asked him to hand over all the communications meant for Gupta. Accordingly the money was handed over to the police who informed the witness that Gupta was involved in a conspiracy case.

The Statesman, Sep 4, 1931

EVIDENCE OF C.I.D. OFFICIALS

Cawnpore, Sep 3 :

The hearing of M. N. Roy's case was resumed today.

Mr. Pramode Mohan Chakravarty, Deputy Superintendent of Intelligence Branch, Calcutta Police was examined. He proved certain exhibits which were photographs of letters intercepted by him and were exhibited in the 1924 Cawnpore case.

Mr. Pramode Chaudhury, Asst. Sub-Inspector of Intelligence Branch, Calcutta Police, was examined next. He stated that he had intercepted certain letters, photographs of which were exhibited.

The Statesman, Sep 5, 1931

MEETING WITH M. N. ROY IN MOSCOW

Professor's Story

Cawnpore, Sep 4 :

Dr. A. H. Mansur, of the Aligarh Muslim University; Mr. R. G. P. Thomas, who was Supdt. of Police in Cawnpore in 1923, Mr. Kushal Chand Chopra, a Sub-Inspector of Police and Ganga Charan were the prosecution witnesses examined today.

Mr. Chopra proved copies of letters that he had intercepted.

Dr. Abdul Hussain Mansur said that in the course of his studies he had visited France, England, Turkey and Russia. He was in Russia from 1920 to June 1922 as Professor of Arabic at the Academy and the Lazarewsky Institute of Moscow. From Russia he went to Germany and returned to the country in 1931.

Incidents in Russia

He came to know the accused as M. N. Roy for the first time in Moscow where Roy was a member of the Third International and the sole representative of India. He could not say whether Roy remained in Moscow all the time. He was told that Roy had been visiting different places. He knew Roy was an Indian.

Cross-examined by M. N. Roy, witness said that he was in Turkey from 1916 to 1918 but refused to say why he was there. He said he was in Berlin in 1915 when he was studying for his Ph. D. degree and that while in Berlin he knew of the the existence of an Indian Revolutionary Committee. He admitted that before he went to Russia he used to call himself a Communist and said that while in Russia he was put in prison though he had not been convicted. He also admitted that he had approached Roy for help through his wife. He denied that he was released because of Roy's intervention on his behalf.

The Statesman, Sep 9, 1931

M. N. ROY'S APPEAL FOR BAIL

Cawnpore, Sep 8 :

M. N. Roy, who himself argued the appeal today before the District Judge (Mr. H. J. Collister) against the order of the Joint Magistrate refusing Roy's application for bail said that his detention in jail hampered his defence, as he was not able to consult eminent Counsels whom he could not afford to bring to Cawnpore.

Roy referred to the limited powers of the Magistrate to grant bail in cases like this. He said his arguments were not considered on merits. The Magistrate rejected the application mainly on two grounds. Firstly, the Magistrate held that the records of the 1924 case did establish a prima facie case. Secondly, he held that Roy's arguments in support of his bail application was largely a passionate plea in favour of freedom of political opinion which, according to the Magistrate, was outside the scope of the proceedings. He (Roy) added that as a prisoner in the hands of the enemy he could not expect a fair trial. He asserted that all these points were ignored by the Magistrate.

'No Prima Facie Case'

Regarding the establishment of a prima facie case, he (Roy) said that the Magistrate committed a blunder thereby strengthening his doubts about the possibility of a fair trial. The Magistrate placed himself in a rather reprehensible position by declaring that the records of the 1924 case in which he had not been proceeded against established his guilt.

He asked how he could base his order on documents which had not till then been introduced in the record. Even the complaint was lodged in the Court five days after the Magistrate's order refusing bail. The Magistrate held him guilty actually before he was even charged with the offence. This, Roy argued, was a damaging revelation of the method of administration of justice in political cases. Technically, he said there was a new case against him.

Roy continued that the Prosecution had failed to establish that he had left India in 1924 to evade arrest. He was abroad and he was not a fugitive from law simply because he did not come back to the arms of imperialistic justice which he saw had so very little mercy for fighters for freedom. He stayed out of India because he had something more important and useful to do than languish in a British Indian jail. He returned to India when, in the normal course of events, it became necessary for him to return to India.....

He demanded his release on bail as he was entitled to it so that he might be able to arrange for a proper defence.

Application Opposed

Rai Bahadur Durga Prasad in reply pointed out the gravity of the offence which, he said was conclusively proved from the letters and documents on record. Roy was organizing a mass revolution and wanted to achieve his object by violent means. Roy was financing the movements and supplying different centres with funds and literature. Roy was sending copies of the *Vanguard* to various addresses in India.

* * *

NO BAIL FOR ROY : REMARKABLE PLEA

Sessions Judge Upholds Magistrate's Orders

Cawnpore, Sep 9 :

M. N. Roy's application against an order of the Joint Magistrate refusing him bail was dismissed today by M. H. J. Collister, District and Sessions Judge of Cawnpore.

"I have heard the applicant in person and also the Special Prosecutor", said Mr. Collister. "The offence being non-bailable and being punishable with transportation for life the onus is on the applicant to establish that bail can with propriety be allowed. He pleads that evidence against him proves no more than that he holds a certain political opinion and represents a certain political party and he has propounded before me the 'remarkable plea' that a man cannot be convicted merely because he wants to change the constitution. But there are different ways of trying to change the constitution.

"The main plank in the applicant's arguments, however, is that documents which were proved in the 1924 case cannot be regarded as prima facie evidence against him, in as much as he was not treated in that case as an absconder. It is apparently true that he was not dealt with as an absconder in that case but his name headed list of accused persons in the complaint. I am clearily of the opinion that the documents proved in that case can and should be treated as prima facie evidence in the present case.

Revolutionary Manifesto

"I have been referred by the Prosecutor to the various documents. Exhibit I is a revolutionary manifesto.

"In the manifesto violent revolution is advocated. The writer says 'British rule in India was established by force and is maintained by force. Therefore it can and will be overthrown only by violent revolution'.

"Then there is Exhibit 5 signed M. N. Roy, which shows prima facie that the applicant was the organizer of the Communist Party whose object was to take a very active part in the formation of a mass party for the revolutionary struggle. In that letter it is further stated that their programme 'will be so formulated as to attract to us all discontented elements within the Congress ranks'.

"In Exhibit 3 the writer says inter-alia 'the economic emancipation of the exploited can only be attained by expropriation of the expropriators which cannot be done by peaceful and non-violent means. It is ridiculous to say that we are non-violent revolutionaries. Such a breed cannot grow even in the soil of India'.

"In my opinion there is abundant prima facie evidence to support the charge under Section 121A against the applicant. In the present case I do not think that grounds have been established for granting bail.....For the reasons given above I dismiss this application."

The Statesman, Sep 17, 1931

Cawnpore, Sep 16 :

The case against M. N. Roy will be taken up tomorrow. There was some misunderstanding about the date and a number of witnesses, press representatives, Maulana Hasrat Mohani, Pandit Hariharnath Sastri and Thakur Brajesh Singh were all present inside the jail gate.

The Statesman, Sep 18, 1931

M. N. ROY'S TRIAL: DEFENCE OBJECTIONS OVERRULED

Evidence on Identity of Accused

Cawnpore, Sep 19 :

When the trial of M. N. Roy was resumed in the Cawnpore jail today, the Defence Counsel (D. P. Sinha) raised a number of objections which were all overruled by the Joint Magistrate.

Mr. D. P. Sinha, who has been specially briefed for the day, raised objections on three points; firstly, the trial being held inside the jail, secondly, about the jurisdiction of the Trial Magistrate to try the case, and thirdly, as to whether Cawnpore had jurisdiction to hold the trial. The Court overruled all the three objections.

Mr. Sinha then requested the Court to stay the proceedings to enable him to appeal against these rulings. The request was refused.

Mr. J. N. Chakravarty, Officiating Superintendent in the office of the Accountant General of Bengal, was the next witness. After closely observing Roy for some minutes, the witness said that Roy somewhat resembled Narendra Nath Bhattacharjee of his village Kodalia in 24 Parganas. He had seen Bhattacharjee some 20 years ago.

The witness was being examined regarding the relation of Bhattacharjee, but the Counsel for Defense disputed the relevancy of the question. The Public Prosecutor replied that the examination was intended to fix the identity of Roy as a British subject.

Counsel for Defense requested the Court to allow Brajesh Singh (who later married Stalin's daughter Svetlana) into the court inside the jail as he alone would be able to instruct the Counsel for Defense.

Statesman, Sep 19, 1931

PLEA FOR TRANSFER OF ROY'S CASE

Trial Adjourned

Cawnpore, Sep 18 :

M. N. Roy applied today for stay of proceedings in his trial before the Joint Magistrate as he wanted to move the Allahabad High Court for transfer of the case from Cawnpore to some other district, owing to restrictions imposed upon him and his friends.

The case was then adjourned till September 28.

Statesman, Sep 26, 1931

PRAYER REFUSED

M. N. ROY'S PETITION TO HIGH COURT

Allahabad, Sep 24 :

The application of M. N. Roy, the undertrial prisoner in the case pending before Mr. Lloyd, Joint Magistrate, Cawnpore, was dismissed today by Mr. Justice Niamat Ullah in the Allahabad High Court.

The petitioner submitted that either the proceedings in the case now pending before the Joint Magistrate should be quashed on the ground that they were *ultra vires* and without jurisdiction, or in the alternative, the case should be transferred to some other court outside Cawnpore. In support of his second prayer the petitioner submitted that he apprehended that he would not get a fair trial in the court of Mr. Lloyd.

His Lordship in rejecting the application observed that these were not sufficient grounds for the transfer of the case from the court of the joint Magistrate.

Roy's revision application to argue the case in person has also been refused. His application for bail has been admitted and will be heard in due course.

Statesman, September 26, 1931

STORY OF INTERCEPTED LETTERS

Hearing Resumed in M. N. Roy's Case

Cawnpore, Sep 28 :

Evidence relating to intercepted letters was given by CID officials when the hearing of the case, in which M. N. Roy is on trial, was resumed.

Mr. Damodar Varman Karnik, officiating S. P., 'B' Division, Bombay, said that a number of letters were intercepted.

One of the letters was addressed to "Kiron Behari Roy, New India Insurance Company, Bombay; another to K. B. Roy, 'Bombay View', Gwalior Tank. Bombay and one to M. E. Taylor, Post Box 54, Berlin".

The witness stated that he gave evidence in the 1924 case. He knew Kiron Behari Roy of New India Insurance Company. Kiron Behari was examined in the 1924 case. He received Rs. 350 in September 1923 from Kiron Behari which had been produced in the committing Magistrate's court in 1924. Kiron Behari told witness that the money was for Nalini Gupta and, as far as he remembered, it came from Roy.

Continuing, witness said, he knew Dange. He had seen him in Bombay in 1923, and in Cawnpore in 1924. He saw Dange in the presence of the Deputy Commissioner of Police. The Officer had shown Dange a photograph and Dange admitted that the man had visited him.

Three Applications

At this stage Roy told the court that he was not legally represented. Mr. Iqbal Kishen Kapoor, he said, was only acting as his adviser. He intended to put in three applications. He was obliged to take this course as his friends had not been allowed to interview him. His first application related to the grant of permission to Brajesh Singh to interview him; the second for free copies of the court's rulings and the third for inspection of documents. He remarked that he would take a week to inspect the documents.

After lunch, Mr. Sashi Bhusan Bhattacharjee gave evidence. He said he was an Inspector in the District Intelligence Branch, 24 Parganas, Alipore. He knew Narendra Nath Bhattacharjee, whom he saw for the first time in December 1907.

The Public Prosecutor at this stage explained that the evidence he was going to give would prove the previous bad character (of Roy). Roy's connection with the revolutionary party, his going out of India, his state of mind, his ill-will against the British Government were, continued the Public Prosecutor, all relevant facts, admissible in evidence.

Roy said he strongly objected to the production of evidence on any of these matters, as they were inadmissible in law. He had left India ten years before the warrants were issued for his arrest and as for ill-will against the British, no less than 90 percent of the Indian population were guilty of the same offence.

Political Dacoities

The Court allowed the Crown Counsel to put questions to the witness.

Witness (Sashi Bhusan Bhattacharjee) stated that he remembered the Changripota Railway Station dacoity in December 1907. It was a "political dacoity" and three persons were arrested, one of whom was Naren Bhattacharjee.

Witness also remembered the Netra dacoity which occurred in April 1909. This too was a "political dacoity". Witness and other officers were deputed from 1915 to keep an watch on the movements of Naren Bhattacharjee and other members of his party.

Witness remembered the motor dacoity at Garden Reach in February 1915. This dacoity, he said, was also a "political dacoity". A search was made that very day but he was not found. Some five or six days later he was arrested in Calcutta but he was released on bail. That same night there was another dacoity at Bellighata near Sealdah station. On receipt of information witness along with others set out to search for Naren Bhattacharjee and other members of the revolutionary party but he was not found. When the case was taken up in the middle of March, Naren Bhattacharjee was declared an absconder.

In September 1915, he learned that Naren Bhattacharjee was in Batavia under the assumed name of C. A. Martin. In 1922 he learned that Naren Bhattacharjee was in Berlin under the assumed name of Manabendranath Roy He (witness) then heard that Naren Bhattacharjee was in Moscow and (was) a member of the Third International in charge of the Eastern Section. This information was based on news received from secret agents and from intercepted communications. Witness added that Naren Bhattacharjee was born in Arbelia village, Baduria, in 24 Parganas district. His father, Pandit Dinabandhu Bhattacharjee, was a teacher.

Roy's request for a week's adjournement was granted and the case was fixed for October 5.

The Statesman, January 10, 1932

12 YEARS FOR M. N. ROY

Cawnpore Sentence: Conspiracy to Wage War

Cawnpore, January 9:

M. N. Roy was sentenced to transportation for 12 years for conspiracy to wage war against the King Emperor,

Roy, who was well-known as an Indian revolutionary and had been "wanted" by the Indian police since 1924 to answer a charge of waging war against the King was arrested in Bombay in the early hours of July 21 last. He was alleged to have conspired with other revolutionaries in Russia to foment revolution in India.

The trial opened before Mr. Lewis Lloyd, Joint Magistrate of Cawnpore on August 31.

The Statesman, Jan 12, 1932

Editorial Note

"The conviction of M. N. Roy ends in a trial which provided plenty of sensational disclosures and aroused much interest.....the proceedings extended over several months and involved a considerable outlay of public money. In view of the charge proved against him, the sentence cannot be regarded as a heavy one."

* * *

[M. N. Roy appealed against the judgement of Jt. Magistrate in the Allahabad High Court. On 2 May 1933, Mr. Justice J. Thom of Allahabad High Court dismissed Roy's appeal but reduced his sentence to six years' rigorous imprisonment. Dr. Kailash Nath Katju defended Roy in the Allahabad High Court.

After the Sessions Judge had delivered his judgement on Jan 9, 1932, Roy wrote to his wife in Europe on Jan 16:

> "I suppose the news came rather as a rude shock. The blow was unexpectedly heavy.....There will be an appeal to the High Court.....Eight years ago for the same evidence, others were given four years."

All the representations made by Roy and his friends in India and abroad failed to convince the authorities that he was qualified for 'A' Class. The Allahabad High Court reduced his sentence to six years but he was still kept as a 'B' Class prisoner.

In contrast nearly all the Meerut Conspiracy case prisoners were released by the end of 1933, about four and a half years after they were arrested; and "the liniency of the prison regime made it possible for the Meerut prisoners to be consulted by their comrades on the outside" (Overstreet and Windmiller, Communism in India, p. 137). Philip Spratt recalled that they were able to set up 'what amounted to a party office' inside the jail. (Blowing up India; p. 53)—SNR].

M. N. ROY'S DEFENSE

Extract from "I Accuse"

The burden of the prosecution evidence is that I hold certain revolutionary political and social views, that I have propagated these views and that I have tried to organize a party of the working class with the object of putting those views into practice. I admit all this but I maintain that this does not establish the charge against me. My conviction would mean an attack upon the freedom of opinion, expression and association.

I do not make a secret of my determination of helping the organization of the great revolution which must take place in order to open up before the Indian masses the road to liberty, progress and prosperity. The impending revolution is an historic necessity. Conditions for it are maturing rapidly. Colonial exploitation of the country creates those conditions. So, I am not responsible for the revolution nor is the Communist International. Imperialism is responsible for it. My punishment, therefore, will not stop the revolution. Imperialism has created its own grave-digger, namely, the forces of national revolution. These will continue operating till their historic task is accomplished. No law, however ruthless may be the sanction behind it, can suppress them.

The very adjective "violent" is superflous in the case of revolution, for revolution by its very nature implies violence. The object of a revolution is to overthrow the established social order buttressed upon a particular type of political state. The function of the state is to suppress and coerce all opposition to the established order. The essence of the state power is violence. A revolution, that is, a radical social and economic transformation of society according to the need of the given epoch, is therefore conditional upon the overthrow of the state defending the established order. Consequently, by its very nature, revolution is inseparable from violence. The resistance of the established order is responsible for it.

The charge against me represents a gross violation of the Indian people's right to liberty, to set up their own government responsible to themselves in place of the present despotic foreign regime. In refuting the absurd charge, I have purposely not called in the evidence of foreign and frankly revolutionary authorities. I have relied exclusively upon liberal English thinkers and respectable constitutional lawyers to establish my case. I justify what I have held and done on the unchallengeable authority of Locke, Hume, Bentham, Bagehot, Dicey and even Balckstone. You can not punish me unless you proscribe the writings of these political philosophers and constitutional lawyers as seditious, revolutionary and treasonable. I may be punished, nevertheless. I am the victim of a system which knows no other law than the law of coercion and violence. But I may warn this court in the words of another historian of the British constitution. Referring to the case of Hampden, Lord John Russell wrote : "The judges in Westminister Hall decided against him but the country was roused and overbalanced by their sympathy the judgment of a court of law."

Extract from the Allahabad High Court Judgement against M. N. ROY in the Appeal

"....The law does not prohibit a person from forming any views however extreme they may be and if the appellant had confined himself to an academic discussion as to the soundness of his views he would have been guilty of no crime ; his letters and pamphlets, however, are not mere erudite academic discussions. It is clear that the appellant had left the regions of economic discussions and had entered the regions of political action. In his statement before the Sessions Court the appellant prays in aid the works of Hume and Bentham which he claims are authorities for the proposition that it is permissible to engage in an attempt to overthrow a Government by violence. The writings of Hume and Bentham are quite irrelevant to the present issue however weighty the opinion of these philosophers may be in academic matters. Having decided to go beyond the stage of academic discussion it was necessary that the appellant should have regard not merely to the attractive doctrines of political philosophers but to the mundane matter-of-fact provisions of the Indian Penal Code. This Court has no concern with the justice or otherwise of the claims of the appellant or with the rectitude of his political views, but the Court may take cognisance of the fact that he holds certain views ; for as a guide to his conduct and intention these views are more relevant consideration. With the knowledge that the appellant considered that he could morally resort to force it is impossible to put an innocent interpretation on his actions and to hold that he was engaged between the year 1921 and 1924 in peaceful legitimate political propaganda.....

As with the doctrine of political philosophers so with the theories sound or unsound of constitutional law, they avail nothing against provisions of the Indian Penal Code. In conclusion it may be observed that if any corroboration of the prosecution case were necessary it is to be found in the statement of the accused himself in the Sessions Court.....He says in the course of his statement (in the Sessions Court) :

> 'In all the documents the responsibility for which I have admitted there occurs in several places the inevitability of violence in the struggle of the Indian people for freedom. ....The sovereignty of the Indian people is usurped by foreign power. As the foreign power maintains itself in power by force the Indian people are obliged to use force to recover their sovereign rights.....I hold that the British Government of India has been an enormous tyranny and oppression for the Indian masses and it has never been an advantage to them. So the people of India are fully justified on the authority of Hume to take up arms against the present Government. I maintain that the people of India owe no allegiance to the British Crown.'

It is unnecessary to refer further to the appellant's statement in the Sessions Court. Upon a consideration of the entire evidence I hold for the reasons given that the appellant is guilty of an offence under Sec. 121-A. I.P.C., and that he has been rightly convicted by the learned Sessions Judge.....In conjunction with the avowed enemies of the British Empire he engaged in an attempt, however futile, to stir up armed revolution in India. His associates in the conspiracy were tried in the year 1924 and were sentenced to four years' rigorous imprisonment. In deciding what punishment should be awarded against the appeallant, however, I take into consideration the fact that he was the leader amongst the conspirators; his was the moving spirit and the master mind. In view of the fact, that the appellant has been incarcerated since his arrest in 1931, I am of the opinion that the ends of justice will be met by sentencing him to six years' rigorous imprisonment.

In the result the sentence of transportation for 12 years against the appellant is reduced to one of six years' rigorous imprisonment. Quid ultra the appeal is dismissed.

May 2, 1933 Signed : J. Thom

APPENDIX II

THE LABOUR MONTHLY

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INDIAN POLITICAL EXILES IN FRANCE

by Evelyn Roy

The increasing severity with which Indian political exiles are treated in French territory leads one to believe that it is due to the policy of close co-operation entered into between the French and British Government since the advent of the Conservatives to power in Great Britain.

Three such cases have been brought to our attention in the past few weeks, and a fourth one has just been added.

The first and most shocking is the expulsion from France of Manabendra Nath Roy, political exile and well-known revolutionary from British India, whose writings and organising activities have done so much to bring India into close touch with the outside world, and whose ideology has deeply impressed itself upon the Indian liberation movement, especially during the past four years. Manabendra Nath Roy has been actively associated with the nationalist and revolutionary movement in India since the age of fourteen years, that is to say twenty years of his life have been dedicated to the cause of the suffering millions there. Severely persecuted on account of his activities by the British Indian Government, he was several times imprisoned and finally forced to escape in 1915 to avoid a heavy punishment. Since that time he has continued his activities on behalf of his country by means of writing, organising and arousing public opinion in various countries on behalf of his country's cause. He is the author of several books—*India in Transition, One Year of Non-cooperation, India's Problem,* *What Do we Want?* and *Political Letters*—all severely prohibited in India.

He came to Europe in 1920, and has travelled extensively in nearly every European country, his life tormented by the ceaseless activities of the British Secret Service, which has dogged his footsteps from the Orient to America, from America to Europe. The German Government, acting under British pressure, issued an order for his arrest in 1923, but he left Gemany before it was executed and took up his residence in Switzerland. Here also, pressure was brought to bear to bring about his expulsion, which was refused by the Swiss Government. He came to France in July of 1924, after the Herriot Government came to power, hoping to find here a wider field of activity and a safe refuge on the soil of France. His expulsion, executed on January 30, can only be attributed to British pressure brought to bear upon the French Government, which has refused him the right to remain on French soil.

A very ugly feature of his expulsion lies in the fact that reports were telegraphed out to India by Reuter, from an obviously inspired source, on February 6, that "M. N. Roy was on his way from France to India under arrest on a Warrant issued in India against him as a result of the Cawnpore Conspiracy Trial. It appears that only a slight miscalculation of time prevented the British authorities from seizing him and putting him aboard a steamer bound for India, before any public protest could be made, or any preventive action taken on the part of his friends. The manner of his arrest and expulsion bears this supposition out.

M. N. Roy was taken in the street, on photographs and information supplied by Scotland Yard; he was hustled to the nearest local police station by a detective and three policemen, without any warrant of arrest being shown to him, nor any proof of identity being provided. From there he would have been taken to the frontier without further formality had not the impatience of the detective to get rid of him obliged him to send his victim to the prefecture of Police, where the writ of expulsion was executed with the same brutal haste. His demand for a delay of twenty-four hours, in order arrange his affairs and to consult a lawyer, was roughly denied; he was not allowed to communicate with anyone before his departure, and was sent under escort to the frontier by the first train.

His wife, who was arrested with him, was kept in detention until his departure, without being allowed to see or speak with anyone. He was told by the detective who arrested him that he was going to be sent to England. The fact that he was sent to Luxembourg only shows that a country was selected where his abduction by British Secret Police would be an easy matter. His escape may be regarded as a miracle of good luck.

The other cases which have been brought to our attention of the persecution of Indian political exiles at the French authorities include two refugees in the French colonies of Pondicherry and Chandernagore. Mr. R. C. L. Sharma, political refugee from British India since before the war, has been constantly harassed by the French and British Secret Police, acting in common. In September-October, 1924, he received a verbal order to leave French territory without delay, no reason being given. Through his lawyer, he was able to secure a delay by demanding a written order from the Governor, who gave him the choice of leaving French territory or going to live in a small village of the interior, Canouvapeth. Here he has lived for the past six months, closely watched by the French and British Police, unable to leave without authorisation. No offence against French law has been alleged against him; he has done nothing to justify these arbitrary measures.

At British instigation, the introduction, distribution and criculation of literature printed in English and freely circulated in Great Britain is severely prohibited in French India, because in these publications the truth about British rule in India is told.

A third case, now occupying the attention of the Indian public, is that of Mr. Moti Lal Roy, political exile in Chandernagore from British India, the founder of an Ashram of religious school and editor of a newspaper, *Prabartak*. Mr. Moti Lal Roy is a highly religious man, whose pupils revere him as a "Guru" or spiritual teacher. Besides religious instruction, his school aimed to teach the students to become self-supporting in life. He is the author of several religious books. He was called before the local Administrator and severely interrogated about his activities, in rude and insulting language.

His school was searched, its pupils subjected to cross examination by the police, and his paper suspended. We will quote his own appeal to French public opinion at this unmerited treatment :—

> The great determination that for the last fifteen years has led me to dedicate myself to the service of God and country ; the fire of sacrifice which has consumed my all, while ceaselessly labouring and wailing for its fruition ; if all this is deemed to mean nothing else but a disturbance of law and order in the land, then must I not declare from the housetops that even the path of true self-discovery for this nation is closed, and its sadhana (realisation) of manhood in danger. Should I not then, even at the cost of my very life, demonstrate that a pure, blameless seat of religious culture is being made the target for destruction by the power of Europe priding itself upon twentieth century civilisation ; that the sword of oppression hangs not only over British India, challenging the national manhood there, but the same menace shadows the face of French India as well ? I appeal to the French nation, who preached the gospel of Equality, Freedom and Fraternity—to the national leaders and to my countrymen, and hereby draw their attention to see that the holy seat of national culture and spiritual sadhana is not endangered or baffled in its object under the ban of unjust oppression.

We believe that the French people, once aware of these wrongs inflicted upon the sons of India who are struggling to free their country from one of the blackest tyrannies in history, will demand the protection of these exiles who have sought refuge from British prosecution on the soil of France or her colonies. The position of Indian political refugees is seriously menaced; it lies with the French people who still believe in the rights of man to demand their protection at the hands of the French Government.

The following letter has been addressed by M. N. Roy to the French "Ligue des Droits de I'Homme et du Citoyen", in protest against his expulsion from France (described in the article above) :—

Paris, *March* 10, 1925

Sir,

Permit me to submit the following facts for your consideration, thinking that they demand an intervention on your part.

On January 30, I was arrested in Paris in fulfilment of an order of expulsion, and without being given the means to consult a lawyer for my defence.

Thus, by one stroke of the pen, the right of asylum for Indian political refugees has been destroyed, and with this right, the idea which Indian revolutionaries hold, that France is the home of Liberty and Democracy for all the oppressed people of the world.

I appeal to the Ligue des Droits de I'Homme to obtain redress, and to this end I shall briefly recount the facts.

For twenty years, that is to say since the age of fourteen, I have fought in the ranks of Indian revolutionaries to free ourselves from foreign rule. My activity, dedicated to the cause of the 320,000,000 oppressed people of my country has brought upon me, as upon all Indian revolutionaries the brutal persecution of the English Police. I have been imprisoned several times. In 1915, I was forced to flee from India to escape the extreme penalty of the so-called "law" which holds the Indian people in their present state of slavery.

The British police have not left me in peace. even in my exile. They have pursued me step by step, from one country to another, from Java to Japan, from China to Phillipines, to America, to Mexico and through most of the countries of Europe. Having taken refuge in Mexico in 1917, President Carranza, then at the head of the Government, gave me protection, and twice refused a demand for my expulsion presented by the British authorities. The exigencies of a revolutionary life have forced me on several occasions to adopt different names. The sympathy of the Mexican people and Government enabled me to live and travel with a Mexican name, which protected me to a certain extent since 1919, when I left for Europe with my wife. Since that time, we have lived and travelled in most of the European countries studying, organising and making propaganda for the liberation of India.

We left Switzerland for France in 1924, and have lived here six months, working for our cause, without ever mixing ourselves in the internal politics of this country.

My expulsion can only be attributed to foreign pressure brought to bear upon the French Government as it was brought to bear upon the American, Mexican, German and Swiss Governments. The French authorities know whence this pressure comes, but it is difficult to believe that France has voluntarily agreed to become an instrument of British Imperialism. My case is not the only one. Acting under British pressure, the Government of M. Poincare expelled and interned Indian political exiles who had sought asylum in Pondichery and Chandernagore. Two such cases were brought before the attention of the Ligue des Droits de l'Homme in 1924. Can the revolutionary traditions of the great French people aceept such acts of oppression against Indian political refugees, seeking shelter from British persecution on French soil?

In the name of all Indian revolutionaries, I call your attention to this violation of the right of asylum, and demand the annultion of the order of expulsion against me, and the right to enter and to live in France.

With assurances of the highest esteem, I remain,

Very truly yours,
s/d Manabendra Nath Roy

THE ROY CASE : A PROTEST

by Henri Barbusse

(From *The Labour Monthly*; Vol. 7 ; No. 5 ; May 1925)

(Last month The Labour Monthly published an article—"Indian Political Exiles in France"—dealing with the expulsion from France of the well-known Indian revolutionary, Manabendra Nath Roy, who is familiar to our readers as a frequent contributor to these pages.

We print below a protest from the "Pro-India Committee" —Comite Pro-Hindou—of Paris, signed by Henri Barbusse, the General Secretary of the Committee. This "Comite Pro-Hindou", which is of recent foundation, includes many of the most distinguished of French intellectuals, such as Professors A. Aulard. Victor Basch, P. Langevin, Charles Rochet, Marcel Cohen, A. Debierne, MM. Leon Bazalgette, Jean Richard Block, Georges Duhamel, Pierre Hamp, Charles Vildrac and Mme. Magdeleine Marx. It takes as its motto, "To make India and its people better known to the world")

The Comite Pro-Hindou protests energetically against the expulsion, ordered by the French Government, of Manabendra Nath Roy, Indian Nationalist and revolutionary. It holds it to be inadmissible that a Government calling itself democratic, should consent to carry out such a measure of persecution on the demand of the British Government against a man whose only reproach consists in his ardent endeavours to make his country free.

Manabendra Nath Roy, who is one of the most powerful militants in the Indian Nationalist movement, and who has written several important books on this subject, was on the point of being expelled from Germany owing to the same injunctions of the British Government, which forbids him the right to live in British territory. Where he to return to India, he would be imprisoned, perhaps executed. It is hard to believe that a man against whom, we repeat, no charge can be brought, save that of having made propaganda against the exploitation of his fellow-countrymen—that is to say, crime of opinion—can be thus pursued across the world, from country to country without being able to live in one place.

In any case, if these are the brutal and inexorable arguments that England employs to rid herself of those who denounces imperialism, should a Government such as that of France become a partner in such inequities?

The Comite Pro-Hindou draws the attention of public opinion to these facts, and lays before it the grave question of the rights of people. Let all men among us, who still believe in the ideas of justice, liberty and freedom of the spirit, protest with us against this obvious and savage strangling of a conscience!

It may perhaps be alleged that the reason for this expulsion lies in the political ideas of M. N. Roy, who is a Communist. But do not be deceived on this point; this is not the reason which underlies the expulsion which M. Herriot has conceded to Mr. Chamberlain. Manifestly, it is the activity of the writer and propagandist in the cause of Indian freedom, who has consecrated himself since the age fourteen years solely to the cause of the freedom of his country.

Yes or no, has our Government bound its hands to the imperial exigencies of Great Britain? Yes or no, is France to remain open or closed to champions of popular liberties from abroad? It is the right of asylum which is at stake. Is this great principle nothing more than an historic memory in France in the face of international combinations? This is the question that is asked with anxiety by all those who, directly or indirectly, sympathise with the sacred cause of oppressed peoples.

APPENDIX III

CHRONOLOGY

1864 : First International founded by Karl Marx.

1871 : The painter Eugene Potter writes the *Internationale.*

1876 : First International dissolved in Philadelphia, U.S.A.

1887, March 21 : *Birth of Naren Bhattacharya, later known as M. N. Roy*

1889, July 14 : 100th anniversary of the storming of Bastille ; two rival International Congresses meet separately in Paris —the Marxists and Brousseists, the former becomes the Second International.

1899 : Bernstein's REVISIONISM published.

1900 : Fifth Congress of the Second International in Paris. The Colonial question figures for the first time.

1902 : Anushilan Samiti and East Club, two centres of underground revolutionary activity started in Calcutta.

1903 : East Club merges into Anushilan Samiti. Aurobindo Ghosh explains his plan for passive resistance and insurrection to Jatin Mukherjee, then only 24.

1904 : Sixth Congress of the Second International in Amsterdam.

1905, October 16 : Partition of Bengal. M. N. Roy expelled from school for organizing anti-partition meeting.

1906 : Bengal Technical Institute and Bengal National College founded. latter with Aurobindo Ghosh as Principal. (the nuclei of Jadavpur University).

1906-08 : M. N. Roy attends both the Institutes. (Rabindranath Tagore one of the lecturers.)

1907 : Seventh Congress of the Second International at Stuttgart. Demand for a "positive colonial policy" voiced.

June 26 : Under Stalin's direction, Bolsheviks made their largest post office robbery at Tiflis and seize 250,000 roubles.

December 6 : First political dacoity in India, committed by

M. N. Roy at Changripota Railway Station.

1908, January: Roy arrested and later released.

1909. April 25: Roy commits another political dacoity at Netra in South 24 Parganas.

1910: Copenhagen Congress of the Second International.

January 20: Jatin Mukherjee, M. N. Roy and others arrested in Howrah Conspiracy case.

1911, April 19: Jatin Mukherjee, Roy and others released for lack of evidence. After release Roy tours Bengal, Bihar and U.P. to organize revolutionaries.

December: Partition of Bengal annulled. India's capital shifted from Calcutta to New Delhi.

1913, November 1: Hardayal announces formation of Ghadr Party.

1914, March: Jatin Mukherjee sends Satyen Sen to San Francisco to contact Ghadr Party.

1914, August 4: Roy organizes Indian revolutionaries under the supreme leadership of Jatin Mukherjee. British administration names the group "Jugantar".

August 26: 50 Mauser pistols and ammunition looted by members of "Jugantar" group from Rodda & Co., an arms dealer.

1915, February 12: Garden Reach dacoity committed by M. N. Roy.

February 13: Roy arrested.

February 22: Roy released on bail; Beliaghata dacoity committed; Roy goes underground.

March: Secret arms training centre for revolutionaries set up by Roy in Kidderpore, Calcutta.

Jatin Mukherjee moved to secret headquarters at Mohandia near Balasore in Orissa.

April: Roy goes to Batavia to negotiate with the Germans for delivery of arms at Raimangal in the Sunderbans instead of at Karachi. Meets Jatin Mukherjee at Mohandia and Aurobindo Ghosh at Pondicherry on way out.

June 14: Roy returns from Batavia, meets Jatin Makherjee at Mohandia, then returns to Calcutta.

August : Roy goes to Batavia for the second time under pseudonym, Rev. Charles Martin.

September 5-8 : Zimmerwald Conference. Lenin calls for a new International.

September 9 : Police discovers Jatin Mukherjee's secret hideout. Jatin Mukherjee dies in exchange of fire with British Indian Police.

Roy Abroad

Aug 1915-Jun 15, 1916 : Roy travels through several Asian countries in search of arms and reaches San Francisco. Arms deal with a South China warlord, negotiated through Sun Yat-sen.

1916, June 16 : Roy meets Dhangopal Mukherjee at the campus of Stanford University; adopts the new name, Manabendra Nath Roy.

: Meets Evelyn Trent whom he marries later.

September : With Evelyn Trent in Los Angeles.

October : Moves to New York with Evelyn; meets Lala Lajpat Rai and Agnes Smedley, American Socialists and Radicals, and studies Marxism at New York Public Library.

1917, March 7 : Roy arrested from Columbia University campus.

March 9 : Released on bail.

March 11 : Travels to Texas with Evelyn on way to Mexico; stays at Laredo on U.S.-Mexican border under assumed name, Manuel Mendez.

April 6 : U.S.A. declares war against Germany.

April 17 : "An Open Letter to His Excellency Woodrow Wilson, President of the U.S.A." by M. N. Roy released by Indian National Party in the U.S.A.

June 15 : Arrives in Mexico city.

August : Meets Mexican Socialist Party's leaders at the residence of its Chairman, Santibanez. Meeting with von Papen and President Carranza.

1917, August 20: Montagu declaration of British policy: "gradual development of self-governing institutions with a view to progressive realization of responsible government".

November 7: Bolsheviks capture power in Russia under the leadership of Lenin.

December: Government of India appoint Sedition (Rowlatt) Inquiry Committee.

: Roy's Spanish book, "The Way to Durable Peace" published in Mexico.

1918, July: Rowlatt Report published naming Tilak (1856-1920) and Roy as active seditionists.

: Montagu-Chelmsford Report promises second instalment of reforms in India.

August: Roy elected General Secretary of the Mexican Socialist Party. Organizes All Latin American Socialist Conference in Mexico. Publication of Roy's major work in Spanish, "La India: su pasado su presente y su pervenir" (India—her past, present and future).

1919, January 15: Rosa Luxemburg. leader of the Spartakasbund killed by German Army.

March: Rowlatt Act enacted.

: Foundation Congress of the Third (Communist) International at Moscow.

April 13: Massacre at Jalianwala Bagh at Amritsar.

July: Borodin arrives in Mexico and accepts Roy's hospitality, and financial aid for Soviet trade mission stranded in New York.

1919, August: Roy's article, "Hunger and Revolution in India" published in *Gale's* Magazine.

Aug. 25—Sep. 4: Special Conference of the Mexican Socialist Party forms the Mexican Communist Party.

November 11: Armistice ends World War I.

December: The Chinese agitation against transfer to Japan of former German enclaves; agitation against Unequal Treaties.

: Roy leaves for Moscow on Lenin's invitation to attend the second Congress of the Communist International.

: Montagu-Chelmsford recommendation become part of Government of India Act, 1919.

1920 (Jan-April) : Roy in Berlin, meets German Communist and intellectual leaders and Indian revolutionaries. Issues "An Indian Communist Manifesto".

April 24 : Mustapha Kemal abolishes the Khilafat, and sets up government at Ankara.

: Gandhi tours the country canvassing for Khilafat and non-cooperation movements.

End-April : Roy arrives in Moscow, meets Lenin.

May 1 : Addresses Rally at the Red Square.

May-June : Discussion with Lenin on the Colonial Theses.

July 19-Aug. 7 : Second Congress of Comintern. Roy's Theses adopted as supplementary to Lenin's.

September : Comintern's Central Asiatic Bureau opened at Tashkent with Roy as Chairman. Political-Military School for Indian emigres opened.

1920, September 14 : Soviet Republic established at Bokhara under Roy's leadership.

: Anglo-Soviet Trade Treaty signed.

October 17 : Communist Party of India formed at Tashkent.

1921, December : Nagpur Session of the Indian National Congress decides to launch Khilafat and non-cooperation movements. Solitary opponent M. A. Jinnah.

1921, March : Roy and Evelyn return to Moscow. Communist University for the Toilers of the East opened with Roy as Political Commissar.

December : Hasrat Mohani submits CPI manifesto, sent by Roy through Nalini Gupta, at the Ahmedabad Congress.

1922, February 1 : Civil disobedience movement launched by Gandhi at Bardoli.

February 12 : Civil disobedience movement called off after the Chauri-Chaura incident—after a week's duration.

: Motilal Nehru, Ajmal Khan and Vithalbhai Patel, as members of an Enquiry Committee, admit failure of the Civil Disobedience Movement.

March : Nalini Gupta returns to Germany.

April : Roy establishes headquarters in Berlin.

May 15 : First issue of *Vanguard of Indian Independence*, as CPI organ, published in Berlin.

June : *India in Transition* by Roy published in English; also published are *India's Problems* and *What Do We Do?*.

: Second Congress of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) calls for creation of united front with Kuomintang (KMT) against warlords.

1922, July : Swarajya Party formed by Lajpat Rai. Motilal Nehru, Viltalbhai Patel, and M. R. Jayakar; C. R. Das joins the following year.

August : Sneevliet (Henricus Maring) in Shanghai. Sun Yat-sen agrees to let individual members of the CCP enter KMT.

Nov. 7-Dec. 3 : Fourth Congress of the Comintern. Roy elected candidate member of the ECCI and member of the Eastern Commission.

November : Nalini Gupta sent to India second time with Roy's personal letter to C. R. Das, that year's President-elect of the Congress at Gaya.

December 22 : Roy's communication to Das published in Indian newspapers under caption, "Bolshevik Aims in India".

: Roy served with expulsion order from Germany.

1923, May : Seven convicted in the Peshawar (Communist) Conspiracy case to long term imprisonment. Nine of the ten accused were members of the CPI formed at Tashkent in 1920.

June : Roy elected to Comintern Presidium (Imprecor, III-45, 1923 ; p. 430)

: CCP's Third Congress endorses policy of united front with KMT.

: The *Aftermath of Non-Cooperation From Ahmedabad to Gaya* by M. N. Roy and Evelyn Roy published.

October 6 : Borodin reaches Canton, Sun Yat-sen agrees to reorganization of KMT. Chiang Kai-shek sent to Moscow for military training.

1924, January 21 : Death of Lenin.

: New Organ of the CPI, *The Masses,* published from Paris, temporary headquarters of the emigre CPI.

January 29 : First KMT Congress ends at Canton. One-fifth of the new office-bearers elected belong to CCP. Rivalry between Wang Ching-wei and Chiang Kai-shek begins.

March : Kanpur Communist Conspiracy Case instituted. Accused included M. N. Roy (in absentia), Muzaffar Ahmad, S. A. Dange, Shaukat Usmani and Nalini Gupta.

May : Borodin reorganizes KMT.

June : Fifth Congress of the Comintern resolves that in the future it would be necessary "to devote far more attention than hitherto to work in the East" and the emphasis was on combatting British imperialism in India and Afghanistan.

: Whampoa Military Academy inaugurated.

1925 January : The title of *The Masses* changed to *The Masses of India*, published from Paris. A pro-India Committee formed in Paris by Evelyn Roy with Henri Barbusse as President.

January 30 : M. N. Roy arrested in Paris and deported.

March 12 : Death of Sun Yat-sen.

June 25 : Death of C. R. Das.

: Sun Yat-sen University opens in Moscow. CCP sent over 1000 students in the following two years to bulid up its leadership cadre.

1925, July 11-12 : Amsterdam Conference called by the CPGB to formulate policy of action for India. M. N. Roy and Evelyn attended.

August : Evelyn and M. N. Roy separate. Evelyn returns to America.

September 24 : Comintern instructs ~~CPGB~~ to consult Roy on all matters relating to India.

October : Stalin tells Roy not to return to India.

November 1 : Labour Swarajya party formed in India under the leadership of the poet, Nazrul Islam.

December 26 - 28 : Satyabhakta convenes the first Indian Communist Conference at Kanpur. No message from Roy.

1926 February 6 - 7 : Labour Swarajya Party changes its name to Peasants and Workers party. Roy sends message.

Feb - March : Roy elected to the editorial board of *Inprecor*. Sixth Pleunm of the ECCI. Roy elected to the Presidium and President of the Eastern Commission, also elected member of the Comintern Secretariat and Orgburo.

March - April : Roy sends Sepassi to Pondicherry with a printing press for R. C. L. Sharma, formerly printer of Bengali revolutionary journal, *Jugantar,* who had taken refuge in the French enclave. Sepassi deported, Sharma interned.

May 9 : Wang Ching-wei leaves for Paris.

June - July : Publication of *The Future of Indian Politics* by Roy from London.

Nov. 22 - Dec. 16 : Seventh Plenum of the ECCI. Zinoviev removed from Comintern Presidentship. Roy reelected to the Presidium and the Secretariat, also elected member-Secretary of the Chinese Commission along with 'Petrov'. Programme for China drafted.

1926 - End December : After the Seventh Plenum, Roy leaves for China as leader of the Comintern delegation accompanied by Lou Geissler, CCP leader T'ang P'ing-shan, Jacques Doriot (France), Tom Mann (Britain) and Earl Browder (USA) .

December : Philip Spratt, sent by CPGB, and Fazl Elahi 'Qurban', sent by Roy, arrive in India to help organise the CPI and form a Workers and Peasants Party to provide communists with a legal cover and a wider base.

1927 January 3 : Demonstration by Chinese workers. British evacuate Hankow.

January 26 : CCP central committee takes notice of increased Rightist strength in KMT.

mid - February : Borodin's wife, Fanya, arrested by warlord Chang Tso-lin in Peking (held till July 12).

February 12 : Roy reaches Canton.

February 19 : Chiang's broadside against Communists.

Feb. 19 - 20 : Second conference of the Bengal Peasants and Workers Party.

February 22 : Roy's article appears in Canton journal.

: Workers' strike in Shanghai.

February 27 : Roy's warning to Chiang Kai-shek.

: CCP appeals for return of Wang Ching-wei.

: Mao submits his report on Peasants.

March 5 : Wang Ching-wei on way back from Paris. Chiang's disapproval.

March 9 : Roy's second warning, issued from Canton, against compromise with militarism, refused publication by CCP.

March 10 - 17 : Third Plenum of the CEC of KMT meets in Wuhan suggests a joint conference of the two factions.

March 18 : Nanchang (Chiang's) group rejects proposal for joint conference.

March 21 : General strike in Shanghai led successfully by CCP.

March 24 : Nationalist troops occupy Nanking. Chiang moves towards Shanghai.

March 26 : Chiang arrives in Shanghai. Wang arrives a few days later.

Mar. 31 - Apr. 1 : Third, Special, conference of Bengal Peasants and Warkers Party changes name to Workers and Peasants Party.

April 1 : Roy reaches Changsha ; greeted by a gathering of 100,000 people.

April 2: Borodin and Wang Ching-wei receive Roy "warmly" in Hankow.

April 8 : Chiang formally establishes his own government at Nanking and begins arresting Wuhan supporters in Shanghai.

April 9 : Chiang's second coup. Labour pickets in Shanghai disarmed.

: Madame Sun and Wang Ching-wei form People's Revolutionary Council.

April 13 : Roy's telegram to Chiang to desist from holding KMT Executive meeting at Nanking and asking him to honour agreement with Wang.

April 13 - 15 : Roy supports Left KMT decision for peasant and military action in Hunan, Hupeh, Kiangsi and Kwantung.

April 16 : CC of CCP resolved "the consolidation of the base will be carried out in accordance with Comarde Roy's speech" but reverses the decision two days later.

April 17 : Wuhan faction of KMT expels Chiang Kai-shek from the Party.

April 20 : CC of CCP issues declaration welcoming the KMT's decision to dismiss Chiang from the party, and to order his arrest.

Apr. 27 - May. 9 : Fifth Congress of the CCP at Hankow. Wang, a special invitee ; Mao absent.

May 2 : Roy argues at the fifth Congress for a vigorous agrarian programme.

May 4 : Roy presents a summary report of the Seventh Plenum (of ECCI) Theses at the fifth Congress of the CCP. Wang declares that the "KMT fully accepted the Comintern's interpretation of non-capitalist path of revolution".

May 13 : Wang attends CCP Politburo meeting.

: Spontaneous peasant uprisings sought to be restrained by the CCP leadership on Borodin's instructions. Roy appeals to Moscow.

May 16 : Warlord Hsia Tao-yen defects to Chiang. Special session of CCP Politburo—declaration of policy.

: ECCI Eighth Plenum opens in Moscow, lasts for 12 days.

May 20 - 27 : Pan-Pacific Labour Conference at Hankow.

Several Indians invited, attended by members of the Ghadr Party.

May 21 : Changsha coup. Another General rebels and massacres peasants in Hunan.

May 24 : Communist General crushes Hsia's rebellion. Roy urges CCP to retain its independence while collaborating with Left KMT.

: Politburo meeting of CCP on relations with KMT; attended by Wang and Sun Fo (son of Sun Yat-sen).

: Mao comes to the meeting and asks for abeyance of agrarian resolution adopted at the Fifth Congress.

May 26 : Commission of Inquiry appointed to visit Changsha.

May 27-30 : Roy advocates counter-attack on Changsha. Borodin promises but does not provide funds. Borodin wants CCP to appeal to the masses to follow orders of the KMT Nationalist Government.

May 30 : Hunan Provincial Committee decides on an insurrectionary march on Changsha but overruled by the CCP Politburo.

: Roy demands a Plenary meeting of the Central Committee to consider his differences with the Politburo.

: Roy's demand refused. Roy appeals to Stalin.

Aay 31 : Stalin sends his telegraphic instructions to Roy and Borodin advising revolutionary action by the left KMT.

June 1 : Roy's article on steps to halt counter-revolution.

: Wounded soldiers stream in from the Northern expedition. 9000 reach Wuhan by date. Stalin's telegram received and shown to Wang.

June 2 : Hupeh peasant committees dissolved by CC of Left KMT.

June 3 : Roy suggests CCP should address an 'Open Letter' to Left KMT leaders urging appointment of a legal provisional government in Hunan, despatch of a punitive expedition and arming of peasants. The Politburo disapproves of Roy's proposals.

June 7 : Wuhan leaders leave for Chengchow to confer with warlord Feng.

June 8 : Seven Communists shot dead at Changsha.
June 9 : At a CCP meeting at Wuhan, Roy defend peasants and workers against charges of committing excesses.
June 10 : Feng and Wang confer.
June 13 : Wang returns to Wuhan.
June 15 : Politburo meeting of CCP. Roy proposes recapture of Kwangtung.
: Feng confers with Chiang.
: Feng wires Wuhan asking for expulsion of all Russians.
June 19 - 20 : Fourth Congress of the All China Federation of Labour. Roy urges proletariat to assume leadership of the revolution in face of vacillations of the petty bourgeoisie. Congress also addressed by Wang.
June 20 - 21 : Feng and Chiang confer again, and Feng wires Wuhan to make peace with Nanking.
June 24 : For ten days the notables of the dissolving Wuhan KMT met in Wang's residence to discuss how to expel the CCP. Madame Sun and Eugene Chen oppose ouster of Communists.
June 30 : Bukharin denounces Feng, describes Wang as "firmer than others".
July 12 : Fanya, wife of Borodin, released in Peking.
July 13 - 16 : Borodin and friends go into hiding.
July 13 : Chiang's troops enter Wuhan and proclaim martial law.
July 18 : KMT (Wuhan and Nanking) unity achieved. Wang and Chiang bury the hatchet for the time being
July 23 : Lominadze, successor to Borodin, arrives in Wuhan.
July 27 : Borodin leaves Wuhan on Feng promising him safe journey.
August 7 : Chen Tu-hsiu resigns from CCP Chairmanship. CCP leadersship reorgaised.
August 8 : Roy leaves separately for Moscow via Gobi and Urg.
August 20 : Namchang uprising.
October 3 : Roy leaves Moscow for Berlin. Trotsky and Zinoviev expelled from CPSU.

November 7 : Tenth anniversary of Russian revolution celebrated with great pomp in Moscow. Roy attends the celebrations.

November 10 : Motilal and Jawaharlal Nehru visit Moscow. Jawaharlal meets Roy.

December : Trotsky, Zinoviev, Radek, Kamenev and Safarov expelled from CPSU.

: Madras session of the Indian National Congress—decision to boycott Simon Commission. Roy suggests agitation against Simon Commission should be conducted through a demand for a Constituent Assembly.

1928 February 4 : Roy returns to Moscow to attend the Ninth Plenum of ECCI.

February 9 - 25 : Ninth Plenum of the ECCI. Stalin's China policy approved; no aspersion of blame on either Roy or Borodin. Roy reappointed on the Presidium; falls ill.

February 10 - 15 : Brussels Conference of the Congress of Oppressed Nationalities (League Against Imperialism).

: Brandler and Thalheimer (Germany) and others expelled from Comintern.

February 3 : Simon Commission arrives in India.

March : Roy moved to Berlin for operation.

March & April : Comintern's Indian Commission meets.

Jul. 17 - Sep. 1 : Sixth Congress of the Comintern. Roy absent because of illness, sends "Report on India". Roy criticised for his "Report on India", described as "Decolonization" Theses at the Congress.

August 18 : *The Statesman* of Calcutta publishes a letter allegedly written by Roy from Moscow on 30 December 1927 to the Central Committees of CPI and of Workers and Peasants Party.

September 10 : Alleged letter of M. N. Roy from Moscow read in the Central Assembly in support of "Public Safety Bill" (a measure seeking powers to deport Communists from India) and came to be known as the "ASSEMBLY LETTER".

September 15 : *Bombay Chronicle* publishes Roy's rejoinder describing the said "Assembly Letter" as 'fictitious'.

: Jawaharlal Nehru receives cable from 'League Against Imperialism' in Brussels saying that the "alleged M. N. Roy's letter recently published is an absolute fabrication".

: Workers and peasants Party (WPP) compares the alleged "Roy Letter" with the forged "Zinoviev Letter" of 1924.

Sep - Oct : First meeting with Ellen Gottschalk, who later became his wife.

October : Roy replies to Kuusinen's criticism against his "Decolonisation" theory.

December : Presidium of the ECCI decides that "adherents of the Brandler organisation cannot be members of the Communist International".

1929 January 20 : Trotsky deported to Constantinople.

February : Roy's report and documents on China published in Moscow under the title, "Kitaiskaia revoliutsiia i Kommunisticheski Internatsional" by the State Publishing House, Moscow.

March 20 : Meerut Conspiracy arrests.

: Roy's last article appears in *Inprecor* and *Pravda.*

July 3 - 9 : Tenth Plenum of the ECCI. Bukharin removed from editorship of *Pravda.*

ECCI decides to consider all those associating with the Brandlerite Communist Opposition as expelled from Comintern.

September : Roy's article "Crisis in the Comintern" appears in *Gegen den Strom*, the journal of Brandlerite Communist Opposition.

: Roy expelled from Comintern, but decision not announced.

November : Bukharin expelled from Comintern.

December 13 : Roy's expulsion from Comintern announced in *Inprecor.*

December : Roy welcomes Indian National Congress decision at Lahore to accept national independence as its goal, and issues the pamphlet, "The Lessons of the Lahore Congress".

1930 August : Roy sends Tayab Shaikh to India preparatory to his own return with a "Manifesto to the Revolutionary Vanguard of the Toiling Masses of India".

August - Dec. : A Royist group formed in Bombay by Tayab Shaikh.

December : Roy's book, "Revolution and Counter-Revolution in China" Published from Berlin in German (translated from English by Paul Froelich).

Back in India

1930 December 11 : Roy arrives secretly in Karachi and proceeds to Bombay.

1931 Jan - July : "The Masses" and "Independent India"—organs of Royist group published from Bombay. Roy and Shaikh organise "The Committee of Action for Independence" and the "League of Indian independence" with units at Calcutta, Bombay, Ahmedabad, Poona, Benares and other cities.

March 5 : Gandhi - Irwin Pact. Roy criticises pact.

: Roy's "Manifesto" published under the title "Our Task in India" by Tayab Shaikh from Calcutta.

March : Meets Jawaharlal Nehru and secretly attends the Karachi session of the Indian National Congress.

March - May : Roy spends much of his time in touring rural districts of U. P. and on many occasions accompanying Nehru.

July 21 : Roy arrested in Bombay.

Nov - Dec : Roy's trial inside Kanpur jail.

1932 January 9 : Roy sentenced to 12 year's rigorous imprisonment and categorized as a "B" class prisoner.

1933 May 2 : Roy's sentence reduced to 5 years' rigorous imprisonment on appeal, by the Allahabad High Court, but "B" Class status retained.

1931 - 1936 : Roy in jail, studies and writes extensive 'notes' on Science, Philosophy and Society running to about 5000 pages, much of which still remain unpublished.

1933 : Meerut Conspiracy case convicts released.

October 19 : Jawaharlal Nehru issues statement protesting inhuman conditions in which Roy has been kept in Bareily jail.

1934 : Trotsky forms Fourth International at an international conference held at Stockholm, Sweden.

Easter : Communist Opposition requests permission to attend Seventh Congress of the Comintern.

September 17 : Albert Einstein, the scientist, writes to British Ambassador in Washington, D. C. to provide better conditions to M. N. Roy in Almora jail.

1935 August : Seventh (and last) Congress of Comintern reverses ultra-left policy adopted at the Sixth Congress. India not represented. Brandlerite Opposition not permitted to attend. Roy welcomes the new Comintern Policy.

1936 November 20 : Roy released from Dehra Dun jail, serving full term.

1936 November 21 : Roy joins Indian National Congress, addresses the Political conference at Bareilly, elected delegate to the AICC.

December : Participates in the Faizpur session of the Indian National Congress. Meets Mahatma Gandhi and other leaders. Emphasizes strengthening of Primary Congress Committees as "organs of struggle" and evolution of the Congress as the "Constituent Assembly".

1937 Feb - March : Campaigns for the Congress in the elections under the new Constitution.

March 4 : Ellen Gottschalk arrives in Bombay, meets Roy at Kakinada in Andhra Pradesh where Roy fell ill following election campaign tours.

March 10 : Roy marries Ellen at Bombay.

April 4 : "Independent India" published under M. N. Roy's editorship. Nehru and Subhas Bose send greetings. Gandhi sends a post-card asking Roy to give "mute service" to the country.

December : Publication of Roy's book, *The Historical Role of Islam.*

1938 January 20 : Visits Bengal after 23 years. Attends Bengal Provincial political Conference at Vishnupur as special guest. Subhas Bose President.

: Takes residence at Dehra Dun.

September : Munich pact. Roy severely criticises Anglo-French appeasement policy.

: Publication of Roy's books, *"Our Differences"*, *"My Experiences in China"* and *"Fascism"*.

1939 February : Roy visits Calcutta.

March : Attends Tripuri session of the Congress, supports Subhas Bose against Gandhi and urges Bose to form his own Working Committee. Opposes Rightist Pant amendment making Gandhi's approval obligatory for the choice of a Working Committee.

Apr. 29 - May. 1 : AICC meeting at Calcutta. Subhas Bose resigns from presidentship against Roy's advice.

May 1 : Royist group in Congress forms "League of Radical Congressmen" in Calcutta.

June 27 - 28 : First All India Conference of League of Radical Congressmen (LRC) in Poona. 250 delegates attend.

September 1 : Second world war breaks out.

October : LRC thesis on war published.

November 26 : Roy's entry into Punjab for a ten-day tour banned by Government.

1940 February 9 : Roy appeals from Calcutta for a "new leadership" in the Congress.

: Roy defeated in the contest for Presidential election for the Ramgarh session of the Congress by Abul Kalam Azad (183 to 1864 delegate votes), CSP and CPI members voting against him.

May : LRC holds Political Study Camp at Dehra Dun. Roy's lectures at the study camp published later in 1942 as the book. *Scientific Politics.*

1940 June : Hitler's army overruns France.

: Roy refused permission by Congress High Command to hold nationwide demonstration against Fascist invasion of France.

August 21 : Trotsky murdered in Mexico.

September 1 : LRC organizes anti-fascist meetings and demonstrations throughout the country, on the anniversary of the war. U.P. Congress expels Roy but later allows him to resign, for defiance of Congress directive. Other Radical Congressmen also resign following Roy.

October 26 - 27 : LRC Central Executive Committee meets at Meerut. Resolution characterising war as "anti-fascist" adopted. LRC also decides to form an independent Political Party, named "Radical Democratic People's Party".

Dec. 20 - 22 : Radical Democratic Party formed at Bombay, dropping the "People's". Roy presided, Dr. N. B. Khare, former Congress Chief Minister of Central Provinces and Berar, inaugurated.

Dec, last week : As decided at the inaugural conference of the RDP, Roy convenes a representative meeting of leading non-Congress public men and sets up a National Democratic Union (NDU) at Behala in Calcutta.

: Publication of Roy's books *The Alternative, Materialism, Science and Superstition, Letters to the Mahdtma, Gandhism, Nationalism and Socialism.*

1941 June 22 : Hitler attacks Soviet Union.

1941 July : Roy's proposal before the AITUC General Council to support war opposed by Congressmen, Socialists and Communists.

Nov. 29 - 30 : Roy organizes Indian Federation of Labour (IFL) at an Anti - Fascist Labour conference at Lahore.

December 7 : Japanese bomb Pearl Harbour. War enters Asia.

Dec. 15 - 16 : All India Anti-Fascist Student's conference in Delhi presided over by Prof. B. N. Banerjee.

December : Moscow's instructions to support war reach CPI.

1942 February : Chittagong Armoury Raid prisoners issue statement and appeal to support war. Roy welcomes the appeal.

August 9 : Quit India movement launched by Gandhi.

September : Roy starts publication of an evening daily in

Delhi in the name of *Independent India*, later changed to *Vanguard*.

December : Second All India Conference of Radical Democratic Party at Lucknow.

1943 June 10 : Communist International dissolved in order "to strengthen the united front of the Allies".

December : IFL conference at Bombay; committee set up to draft a plan for the economic development of Post-war India, an alternative to Bombay Plan.

: Publicttion of Roy's books, *Communist International; Nationalism : An Antiquated Cult; Indian Labour and Post-War Reconstruction; Nationalism, Democracy and Freedom; Poverty or Plenty?; Letters from Jail; National Government or People's Government?*

1944 April - May : Publication of People's plan drafted by Prof. B. N. Banerjea, G. D. Parikh and V. M. Tarkunde with introduction by M. N. Roy and its adoption at the special conference of the IFL at Jharia in Bihar.

September : Roy prepares a draft Constitution of Free India.

Dec. 24 - 26 : Calcutta conference of the Radical Democratic Party adopts Roy's draft Constitution of free India and releases it for public discussion.

: Publication of Roy's books, *Alphabet of Fascist Economics; Planning a new India; Indian Renaissance Movment.*

1945 May : Germany surrenders.

Apr. 25 - Jun. 26 : Foundation of United Nations at San Francisco. Tayab Shaikh attends as Roy's representative.

June : Release of Congress leaders from jail.

August : Japanese surrender.

November : Publication of Roy's books : *Problems of Freedom; Last Battles of Freedom* (Report of Calcutta conference of RDP); *Jawaharlal Nehru* and start of the Publication of a Quarterly journal *"The Marxian Way"* under Roy's editorship.

1946 Feb. - March : Elections to Provincial Legislatures in India. RDP loses miserably. Roy ill and depressed.

March - June : British Cabinet Mission in India.
May 8 - 18 : Political Study Camp of RDP at Dehra Dun. Roy's lectures at the camp later published as a book titled, "*New Orientation*".

August : Foundation of Indian Renaissance Institute.
1946 December : Bombay conference of RDP; adoption of "22 Principles of Radical Democracy".
: Publication of Roy's books, *Revolution and Counter-Revolution in China; I.N.A.* and *the August Rvolution* and *New Orientation.*

August 15 : Transfer of Power and partition of India.
September : Cominform's first session in Poland. Andrei Zhdanov announces "cold war" and militant left line for the Communists.

1948 January 30 : Assassination of Mahatma Gandhi.
Feb. - March : CPI adopts Zhdanov line at its second Congress held at Calcutta.

September : Communist insurrectionary activities begin in West Bengal and Andhra.
Dec. 26 - 29 : Radical Democratic Party dissolved at its Calcutta conference. Decision to launch Radical Humanist movement.

1949 April : Name of *"Independent India"* changed to *"The Radical Humanist"*.

August : Name of *The Marxian Way* changed to *"The Humanist Way"*

October : Mao Tse-tung proclaims People's Republic of China.
: Publication of the enlarged edition of *The Russian Revolution* by M. N. Roy. Roy starts writing his *Memoirs.*
1950 January 26 : Inauguration of Indian Republic.
January : Cominform line changed from insurrectionary leftism to anti-American "United Front".

1950 June : Outbreak of Korean war.
October : Chinese troops enter Tibet.
1951 : India's First Five Year Plan launched.

: Roy works on his major philosophical-historical book, *Reason, Romanticism and Revolution.*

1952 August : Publication of *Reason, Romanticism and Revolution* (First Volume)

June 11: Roy has serious accident at Mussourie. Moved to Dehra Dun.

1953 March 5 : Death of Stalin. Roy's tribute to Stalin: "No great man has ever been an angel. Greatness is always purchased at the cost of goodness. Stalin did not do anything worse".

August : Roy has second cerebral attack.

December : Signs of recovery. Jawaharlal Nehru visits Roy. Roy dictates article for the *Radical Humanist.*

1954 January 24 : Roy's last article, dictated to Ellen, published in the *Radical Humanist.*

January 25 : Last and fatal attack. Death of M. N. Roy at 10 minutes before midnight.

1955 May : Second Volume of *Reason, Romanticism and Revolution* published posthumously.

1960 December 13 : Ellen Roy murdered in Dehra Dun.

1970 November 21 : Death of Roy's first wife, Evelyn Trent, in the USA.

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हिक्मी रमण रेग्मी, कल्याणी रेग्मी स्मारक, पुस्तकालय
स्था:-२०३७
लाजिम्पाट

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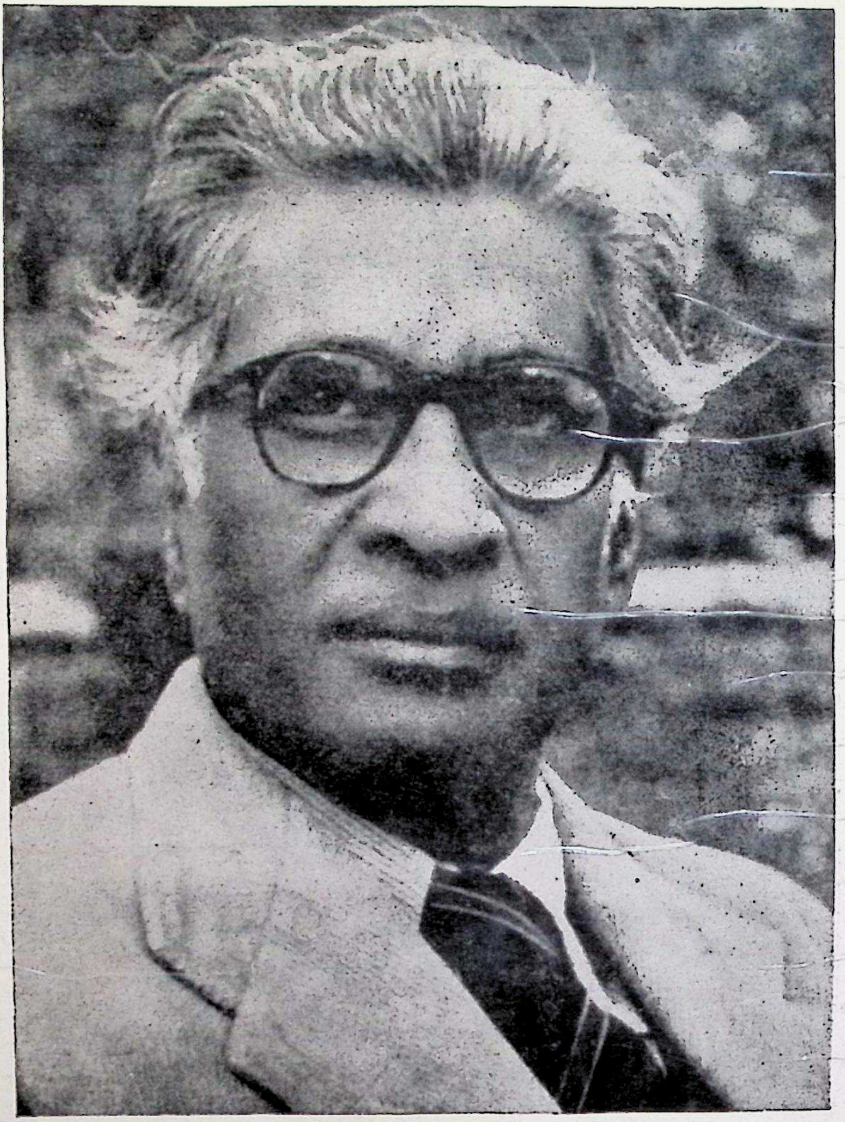
Samaren Roy (b. 1919) met M. N. Roy (no relation) first in 1939 when the elder Roy was actively engaged in establishing a younger leftist leadership in the Indian National Congress against the Gandhian. At the height of this struggle, Samaren Roy met his subject, who each winter since then stayed with his family in Calcutta.

Samaren Roy is the author of (1) *The Restless Brahmin*: The Early Life of M. N. Roy (1970), (2) *The Roots of Bengali Culture* (1981) and (3) *The Story of the Vedic People* (1985) besides other books in Bengali.



"Karl Marx said : 'Man is the root of mankind'. That was even more explicit than what Protagoras had demanded as the criterion of all values...... First comes man, then mankind. What does the principle mean ? the individual is antecedent to society, which is the means for the unfolding of his potentialities in continuation of the process of pre-human biological evolution. The end should not be sacrificed for the means ; the position of the individual is the measure of social progress. That is the philosophical essence of Marxism, the collectivist interpretation of which has become a form of totalitarianism."

—M. N. Roy